

# Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

**Autumn**

(April-June) 1994, no 52

**\$6.50\***

**Surveys:**

**Travel packs**

**Lightweight meals**

**Bushwalking:**

**Federation Peak**

**Mallacoota  
coast**

**Indian Himalayan  
trekking**

**Colo River**

**Mt Kosciuszko  
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*Glenn van der Knijff*

\*Maximum Australian recommended retail price only

# Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

Established 1981

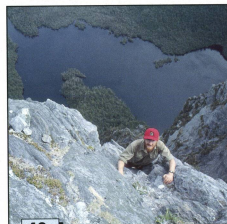
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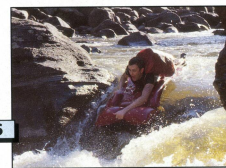
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# WILD PEOPLE

Wild reader survey gives your views

**STOP PRESS**  
Both positions  
filled

Every two years for the last eight years, we have given you, our readers, the chance to tell us, in detail, who you are and what you think of *Wild*. Copies of the 1993 readership survey questionnaire were placed in every ninth copy of *Wild* no 50. We have now completed the mammoth task of processing the completed forms and have up-to-date information which we can use to go on making *Wild* a better magazine.

As with our recent survey of *Rock* readers, we noticed that our efforts to improve *Wild* have been widely noted and appreciated. Most questions relating to your rating of *Wild* and its usefulness to you showed marked improvement over your responses of two years ago.

Sixty-eight per cent (up from 64 per cent) think that *Wild* is good or very good value. The rest consider it acceptable value. (All figures have been rounded to the nearest one per cent.)

There was an impressive response to the question asking you to name items of which you would like to see less in *Wild*. Those of you answering 'none' totalled 61 per cent.

There was also an improvement in your acceptance of *Wild* as noted by your response to the amount of advertising in the magazine. Two years ago 74 per cent thought it was 'about right' or 'too little'. That figure has risen to 76 per cent although the amount of advertising in *Wild* has continued to occupy the same proportion of the magazine ever since our first year of publication!

*Wild*'s feature articles are now generally thought to be 'satisfactory' by 92 per cent of readers (up from 89 per cent), with two-thirds of the rest thinking that articles err on the superficial side. Seventy-seven per cent (up from 73 per cent) consider that our editorial stance on conservation is 'about right', with two-thirds of the rest thinking it 'too hard-line'.

What are you like?

An amazing 59 per cent have been actively involved in the rucksack sports for over ten years. Two-thirds (67 per cent) have been reading *Wild* for over three years.

You are highly educated and extremely well paid (and are also better paid than you were two years ago). Forty-three per cent (up from 39 per cent) have professional employment. Seventy-two per cent have had tertiary education or have a professional qualification. Almost two-thirds (65 per cent, up from 56 per cent) earn \$30 000 a year or more. Two-thirds (67 per cent) report buying a product or service in the last two years as a direct result of seeing an advertisement in *Wild*, and 21 per cent spent \$1000 or more on specialist clothing or equipment in the last 12 months.

Over half (55 per cent) are aged between 20 and 35 years. Female readership has increased from 15 to 18 per cent.

## Wild readers' prizes

We promised gift packages (each containing a *Wild* binder, poster and set of greeting cards) for the first 20 readership surveys we received. The following are the winners: B G Smith, Elwood, Vic; Jack Merx, Mt Evelyn, Vic; Dean Hasnut, Glen Waverley, Vic; Andrew Ashton, Camberwell, Vic; George Scott, Blackburn South, Vic; Maureen Carte, Picnic Point, NSW; John Marshall, Woodend, Vic; Neil Tucker, Epping, NSW; Stuart Downes, Glenbrook, NSW; Ian Knowd, Kurmond, NSW; Wayne Goldsmith, Aranda, ACT; S Wong, Sydney, NSW; Julian Monfries, Semaphore, SA; A Pritchard, Five Dock, NSW; Tim Bond, St Marys, SA; Peter Finglas, Mackay, Qld; Wayne Revell, Kippa-Ring, Qld; K Haskard, West Hobart, Tas; Robert Poole, Sandy Bay, Tas; and B Parsons, Murray Bridge, SA.



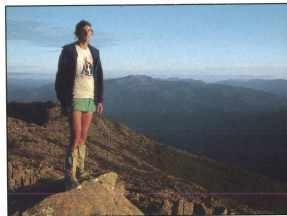
The latest additions to the *Wild* team—Special Advisers Ted Mead, above, and Andrew Cox, right. Ted Mead and Andrew Cox

## New faces

One of the strengths of *Wild* is its extensive network of extremely experienced correspondents and Special Advisers. In this issue we welcome two new Special Advisers: Andrew Cox from Sydney and Ted Mead from Hobart are very well known in 'outdoor circles' in their respective States and will be valuable additions to the *Wild* team and its coverage of rucksack sports and conservation issues.

## A new job! For a young person!! No experience necessary!!!

With this same heading just 18 months ago, in *Wild* no 46, we announced the position to which Shane Merx was subsequently appointed. He's still very much with us—running our subscription and mail-order system—but due to ongoing growth in the size and sales of our



publications (recognized in our win of the 1993 Telecom & Victorian Government Small Business Award for a business with fewer than six employees), we need another school-leaver to 'learn the ropes' from the ground up. The job involves a variety of administrative, clerical, subscription, mail-order and computer work and you will be one of a small, committed team at our South Yarra (Melbourne) office. Full training will be provided (possibly involving time out of the office). We envisage that this full-time salaried position (which is subject to a probationary period) would suit a person aged between 17 and 20. Active involvement in at least one of the rucksack sports and a demonstrable keenness to learn and to work hard to a high standard are essential. Written applications only, to: Stephen Hamilton and Glenn van der Knijff, Wild Publications Pty Ltd, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

## ...and another!

If you are enthusiastically active in the rucksack sports (including climbing) and have the experience, skills and aptitude to be involved in proof-reading, fact-checking, information-gathering and other editorial work on *Wild* and/or *Rock*, please phone me on (03) 826 8482 to discuss the matter in confidence. ■

Chris Baxter



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John Chapman *Track Notes*

Stephen Garnett *Natural History*

Michael Hampton *Cross-country Skiing*

Tim Macartney-Snape,

Greg Mortimer *Mountaineering*

Yvonne McLaughlin *Canoeing*

Brian Walters *Reviews*

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Andrew Menk, David Noble (NSW),

Bob Burton, Geoff Law, Ted Mead (Tas),

Glenn Tempest (Vic), Jamie Pittock (NT)

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Copy deadlines (advertising and editorial):

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(autumn), 15 April (winter), 15 July (spring).

See below for publication dates.

**Contributions**, preferably well illustrated

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For 1994 we are pleased to announce the second of our series of Three Peaks Expeditions. This expedition will be conducted in the Cordillera Blanca in Peru, South America's premier mountain range. Its aim is to climb three peaks in the range. The mountains we will attempt to climb are Cerro Pisco (5752 m), Huascarán (6768 m) and Cerro Alpamayo (5947 m).

The expedition will depart from Sydney on 24 June and return on 29 July 1994.

This expedition is aimed at participants with previous trekking and/or basic mountaineering experience. For participants with little or no mountaineering experience, we will conduct a training seminar to ensure that each participant will possess the skills required to attempt each peak safely. While spectacular in their nature, the mountains we have selected offer quality climbing and challenging but practical mountaineering objectives.

The climbs will involve snow, ice and rockclimbing of varying degrees of difficulty and glacier travelling skills to approach them.

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- Expedition first aid equipment
- Base Camp tentage
- Base Camp staff and climbing guides
- Park entrance fees

## IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE

If you need more information, contact our office today and talk to one of our instructors. Our office is at 182 Katoomba St, Katoomba, NSW 2780. Tel (047) 82 2014. Fax (047) 82 5787.

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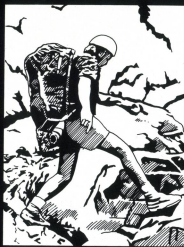


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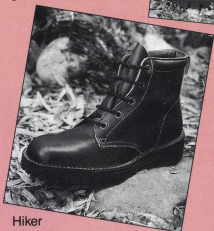


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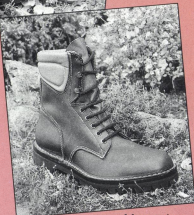


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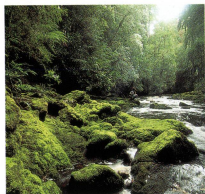
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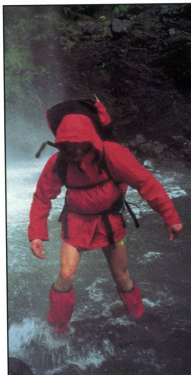
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# POLES APART

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## Expedition to the North Pole

Between March and May 1995 Eric Philips, the sole participant in the Australian North Pole Expedition, plans to complete the first non-resupplied solo walk to the North Pole, a distance of over 750 kilometres. Travel over the frozen sea-ice will be on skis and on foot, with all provisions towed behind on a sled. However, \$250 000 are needed to finance the trip—any donations or sponsorships, large or small, would be appreciated.

Anyone who is interested in making a donation or a part-sponsorship, or wants any further information, can contact the Australian North Pole Expedition by telephoning (or faxing) (03) 531 9547.

## Antarctic walk

Australian mountaineer Greg Mortimer, a member of the successful first Australian ascent of Mt Everest in 1964, is planning to walk from Commonwealth Bay to the South Pole in Antarctica. Apparently Mortimer was issued the challenge by well-known adventurer and publisher Dick Smith, whose

magazine *Australian Geographic* will be a sponsor of the trip.

## Corrections and amplifications

The survey of bushwalking boots in *Wild* no 50 made a number of points which have been disputed. These include the claim that boots with externally stitched soles are stronger than those with moulded soles. It has been pointed out that a key factor in determining a boot's durability was not emphasized—namely, that boots with one-piece uppers tend to be stronger. Also criticized was the assertion that imported boots are not easily repaired: for several years soles have been available for Scarpa and other imported brands, and there are mail-order resoling businesses in Melbourne (Walkalong) and in Sydney (Nu-Tred). The statements that boots are generally available direct to the public from importers and manufacturers, and that custom-made boots are available from local manufacturers, have been questioned. Finally, it has been pointed out that for some years imported boots have been available in two

The Cox/Milton combination is seen feeling the strain of competition in the Open C2 section of the 1993 Victorian Slalom Championships. *Andrew Barnes*

(and in at least one case, three) widths, whereas just one Australian manufacturer has recently begun to offer two widths, and on only one model.

Hat Head National Park is in New South Wales, not Queensland as stated in the photo caption on page 79 of *Wild* no 51.

## QUEENSLAND

### Walking on glass

Late last year, Peter Treseder (the subject of an article in *Wild* no 51 and a letter in this issue) climbed all the peaks of the Glasshouse Mountains in the following order: Mt Coochin, Mt Ngungun, Mt Coonowrin, Mt Beerwah, Mt Tibberowuccum, Mt Tibrogargan, Mt Beerburum and Tunbubudla. He completed the run in the typically remarkable time of 7 hours and 32 minutes.

# Great AUSTRALIAN ROCKCLIMBS

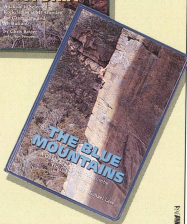
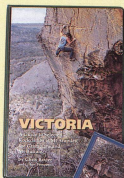
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## NEW SOUTH WALES

## Seventeenth Hawkesbury Classic Paddle results

Saturday 30 October saw 530 paddlers enter one of Australia's most popular canoeing events, the 1993 Hawkesbury Classic Paddle—and raise around \$50 000 for the Australian Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation at the same time.

The race was shortened to 79 kilometres due to an unrelated drowning near the start of the course. Eventually 460 paddlers made it to the finish line at Brooklyn, the winner being well-known athlete Rod Hisslop in a time of 5 hours, 10 minutes and 4 seconds. There are far too many divisions for us to list all the winners, but one of the notable efforts was by Bruce and Joan Morison (66 and 62 years of age,

respectively) who completed the journey in just over eight hours in their Mixed TC2 class. Luckily there was a full moon so many of the participants completed their race during the night or early the next day, with the last pair, two 15-year-old girls, finishing at 1.10 pm on Sunday 31 October.

person C2 event, possibly the most visually exciting event, the winner was the Wilson/Felton combination. It is to be hoped that in a few years' time, spectators will be lining the banks cheering the competitors on just as they do for the other Olympic sports.

Andrew Barnes



The 530 paddlers who entered the 1993 Hawkesbury Classic Paddle helped to raise around \$50 000 for the Australian Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation. Andrew Jacob

## TASMANIA

## A year in the wilderness

Damon and Deanne Howes, the Wilderness Couple sponsored by *Australian Geographic*, returned to civilization on 13 November 1993 after 365 days in the harsh South-west Tasmanian wilderness. They were chosen from over a hundred couples to spend a year in a remote place and live like the pioneers. Their first task was to erect a small A-frame hut, in which they lived for the remainder of their year in the bush.

During their stay they endured severe storms, and there were only fleeting glimpses of sun between days on end of rain. They carried out a survey of Huon pines along the Wanderer River and completed a number of walks, including a five-day walk to Birch Inlet at the southern end of Macquarie Harbour.

This was *Australian Geographic's* second Wilderness Couple, the first being Michael and Susan Cusack, who survived a year in the remote Kimberley wilderness of Western Australia.

## South coast run

On the shortest day of the year in 1993, Tasmanian University student Tim Chappell ran Tasmania's popular South Coast Track from Cockle Creek to Melaleuca Inlet in 20 hours. Chappell reports that he had trouble crossing swollen rivers and creeks and frequently lost the track in the dark, particularly where it leaves beach sections for forest. Chappell met no one during his run and experienced hallucinations during the last hours.

## Tenth annual mountaineering course

Participants in the 1993 National Emergency Service winter mountaineering course, held over seven days between 27 August and 5 September, encountered rain, wind, heavy snowfalls and sunshine. The participants—comprising members of the Ambulance, Police Search and Rescue, and general public—spent five days learning snow-camping

## Wild Diary

Information about rucksack-sports events for publication in this department should be sent to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, VIC 3181.

March	15-17	Australian Sprint Canoeing Championship	NSW (02) 552 4500
	18-20	Sea instructor training & assessment C	NSW (06) 295 6062
	19	Paddy Palin Rogaine	ACT (06) 248 7816
April	26-27	Victorian Canoe Polo Championships	Vic (03) 459 4277
	10	Metrogane R	NSW (02) 665 4925
	16-17	Instructor training & assessment C	NSW (049) 30 7830
May	16-17	VCC beginners' course RC	Vic (03) 428 5298
	16-17	ACT Championships R	ACT (06) 248 7816
	23-25	Sea kayak proficiency assessment	NSW (064) 94 1366
June	30	VCC beginners' course RC	Vic (03) 428 5298
	30-31	Basic skills instructor course C	NSW (02) 809 6993
	1	VCC beginners' course RC	Vic (03) 428 5298
July	7-8	River rescue level 1 course C	NSW (049) 75 3693
	14-15	VCC beginners' course RC	Vic (03) 428 5298
	22-23	NSW Championships R	NSW (067) 72 3584
August	11-13	Advanced proficiency assessment (sea) C	NSW (064) 52 3826
	19	Paddy Palin Rogaine	NSW (02) 888 1354
		Advanced & proficiency testing C	NSW (063) 65 8443
September	6-7	River rescue level 2 course C	NSW (06) 288 5610
	20	Lake Macquarie R	NSW (049) 75 3693
	10	Instructor training & assessment C	ACT (06) 288 5610
October	17	12-hour Rogaine	ACT (06) 248 7816
	8-9	Introductory sea kayak course	NSW (064) 94 1366
	15-16	Australian Championships R	NSW (042) 85 4053
November		Basic skills instructor course C	NSW (02) 958 6908
	5-6	Proficiency testing C	NSW (02) 809 6993
	3-4	Sea kayak proficiency NSW	NSW (064) 93 5035
December		B bushwalking C canoeing R rogaine RC rockclimbing	
		M multisports S skiing	

## Bushwalking guide update

The University of New England Mountaineering Club is planning to release a revised edition of the popular *Guide to North Eastern New South Wales*. Public input to this project, in particular regarding present conditions of the areas described, corrections and other information, is welcome. Write to the University of New England Mountaineering Club, c/- Sports Union, University of New England, NSW 2350.

## Mallee moth

A new species of small Mallee moth which feeds on koala dung was discovered in the Tantanargone State Forest last year. The moth has been named after the chief executive of the CSIRO, John Stocker, in recognition of his strong support for biodiversity research. Small mallee moths—of which there are about 6000 species in Australia—are essential in breaking down fallen eucalypt leaves and recycling their nutrients back into the soil.

## VICTORIA

## Slalom Championships

The 1993 Victorian Slalom Championships were held on the Yarra River at Dights Falls (inner Melbourne) on 27 November. Olympic Silver Medalist Danielle Woodward took out the Women's Open Kayak event, while the Men's Open Kayak section was won by young Melbourne Richard Macquarie. (Macquarie recently won the Japan Cup and was placed sixth in the World Championships in Italy last year, half a second behind the winner.) In the Under 18 section, the Women's was won by Louise Natoli and the Men's by Justin Boocock (who won both the canoeing and kayaking divisions). David Heard just beat Matthew Newton in the Open C1 (single person, single blade, decked canoe) event and in the two-

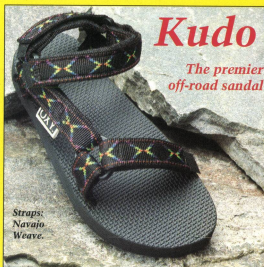
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skills, and snow-, rock- and ice-climbing techniques. On the other two days they attended a mountain-medicine seminar, which included guest speakers Glenn Singleton (of Trango Tower BASE jump fame) and Tashi Tenzing (grandson of Tenzing Norgay who, with Edmund Hillary, first climbed Mt Everest). The aim of the course is to provide search and rescue personnel and the general public with the latest wilderness-medicine information and winter mountaineering skills.

Information on next year's course can be obtained by phoning (004) 24 9770.



Participants in the 1993 National Emergency Services winter mountaineering course seen practising their newly acquired skills in Fury Gully, Cradle Mountain, Tasmania. *Richard Bugg. Right, Brigitte Muir proudly shows off the Wild logo on the Rongbuk Glacier during her recent attempt on Mt Everest (beyond). Muir collection*

## OVERSEAS

### More awards for Australian Mt Everest film

Further to the report in *Information* in *Wild* no 50 (page 17), we now learn that the film *Everest—Sea to Summit*, produced by Michael Dillon, has won the Grand Prix at the 11th International Festival of Mountain Films in Torelló, Spain. The film also won the Boreal Prize for the best script at the festival.

The film tells the story of Australian mountaineer Tim Macartney-Snape's climb from sea-level at the Bay of Bengal, India, to the summit of Mt Everest. Above Base Camp, Macartney-Snape climbed alone and without artificial oxygen.

### BASE jump film receives recognition

The Australian documentary *BASEclimb*, produced by Glenn Singleton (and reviewed in *Wild* no 49), won two awards at the 18th Annual Banff Festival of Mountain Films on 12 November last year. They were the Best Film on Mountain Sports and the coveted People's Choice Award.

The film tells the story of a climber and a BASE jumper who join forces to make a world record BASE jump from Trango Tower, Pakistan, one of the world's highest rock walls.

### Mt Everest attempt

Brigitte Muir, who is attempting to become one of the first women to climb the highest peak on each continent, had to abort an attempt on Mt Everest, with her husband Jon, due to high winds above Camp Two (7600 metres)—a storm was moving in as well.

The International Everest North Ridge Expedition 1993, in which they took part, had

already put two pairs of climbers on the summit on 9 and 10 October, and the Muirs were hoping to be the third pair. Although Brigitte was feeling strong, the conditions were hazardous and her own well-being was obviously important to her—in a fax to us she commented: 'Still, I love my toes, fingers and general self more than any summit!'

Their summit bid was also delayed when the expedition attempted to rescue Carl Henize, who was with them at Advance Base Camp. He later died, presumably of pulmonary oedema, on the descent from Advance Base Camp.

Brigitte, who was partly sponsored by *Wild*, plans to make another attempt on Mt Everest in 1995.

### Monsoon interrupts Makalu attempt

As with Brigitte Muir's attempt on Mt Everest, mentioned above, the attempt by a group of Australians to climb Makalu (8463 metres) was hampered by the severe 1993 monsoon. The team, led by Ian Collins, did not reach the summit (see the *Information* item on page 17, *Wild* no 50).

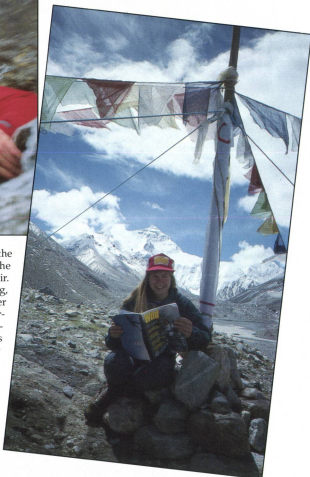
Nevertheless, the Chase Manhattan Makalu Expedition was deemed a success in that the expedition successfully attempted two technically difficult routes, reached a high

point of 7200 metres, and all members returned safely; and this in a season during which the heavy monsoon contributed to the deaths of 14 climbers.

### New Zealand multisport event results

The Gore-Tex Southern Traverse, billed as one of the toughest multisport events on the multisport calendar, involves various legs of paddling, cycling and mountain running over a distance of some 220 kilometres for teams of five people. The winning team in the 1993 event, which began at Lake Ohau on 5 November, was the Radio Central/Rockdrill/Austoil team in a time of 27 hours and 38 minutes.

Second place went to the Designer Aluminium team in 28 hours and 59 minutes, followed in third place by the Arrow International team in a time of 32 hours and 36 minutes.



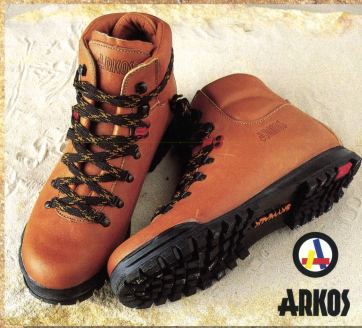
### Peak bagging

Members of the Sutherland Bushwalking Club (Sydney) recently attempted to climb four peaks in the Annapurna region of Nepal, each one over 6000 metres in altitude. While not all walkers bagged all the summits, the peaks of Pisang Peak (6091 metres), Chulu East (6200 metres), Chulu Far East (6059 metres) and Thorongste (6484 metres) were climbed during the expedition. ■

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.



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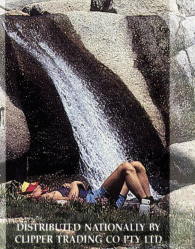


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## Popular New South Wales walking areas burnt

The devastating January bushfires in New South Wales have caused widespread damage to National Parks and other bushwalking areas. The worst affected area is Royal National Park where the fire burnt out 98 per cent of the park, including rain forest along the Hacking River. The vegetation along the Coast Walk, from Bundeeena to Otford, was a sea of black sticks shortly after the fire.

Fires have also burnt out significant areas of the Blue Mountains National Park, including the Grose valley and Blue Gum Forest, the Kindarun and Gaspers Mountain areas in the Wollemi National Park and much of Yengo and Brisbane Waters National Parks. In the north of the State fires have damaged parts of Guy Fawkes National Park and the Nymboida River area.



Life must go on—these bull ants in Royal National Park survived under the flames. *Jim McGregor*. **Page 21** clockwise from top, the pictures tell the story. Smoke from bushfires burning in the Grose valley below Mt Hay, Blue Mountains. *Lucas Trihey*. Looking east from Central Park, Royal National Park. *McGregor*. Bushfire damage near Bridalveil Falls, Blackheath, Blue Mountains. *Trihey*

Bushland close to Sydney in the Lane Cove State Recreation Area, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and Garigal National Park has also been subjected to intense wildfires.

While the vegetation in many areas will grow back quickly, the Royal National Park Chief Ranger, Ken Ayres, has stated that the rain forest will take over 250 years to recover.

Most of the fires started from arsonists. The Wilderness Society has asserted that more road closures are needed in wilderness areas to avoid similar fires in the future. (Blue Mountains canyons and rockclimbs have also been affected as Lucas Trihey reports in the following item.)

*Roger Lembit*

## Canyons escape the fire's worst fury

Most walking tracks in the Grose River, Wollangambe River and Bell Creek catchments have been affected in some way by fire damage and access to canyons including Claustal, Thunder, Wollangambe, Bell Creek and Bownes Creek will also be affected. It appears that the canyons themselves may have escaped the worst of the fires although experience from previous fires around

canyons would indicate that debris levels choking the canyons may be higher than usual.

Most of the popular climbing areas escaped unscathed but some less-visited areas such as Victoria Falls and Mt Banks could be affected.

At the time of writing many fires were still burning throughout the area so if you plan to visit the Blue Mountains, contact the National Parks office at Blackheath for more up-to-date information on tracks and access.

*Lucas Trihey*

## St Kilda to Bondi on foot

By the time you read this item, walkers in the Australian Conservation Foundation's Coast-Walk should have arrived at Bondi Beach, Sydney, after starting from St Kilda, Melbourne, 121 days earlier on 12 November 1993. Along the route they will have passed four areas of national significance: Western Port Bay (where 85 per cent of sea-grass meadows have been lost due to pollution); Loch Sport (where a \$35 million tourist development is planned); the Eden region (where population growth has resulted in inappropriate urban development causing environmental degradation); and Jervis Bay (where 30 000 hectares of land are listed on the Register of National Estate because of their outstanding natural values). Along the way, the CoastWalkers asked Australians to register their names on a petition. The 'Count me in as a Coastie' theme seeks 100 000 names for a petition that will be used to lobby government and industry to join local communities in protecting Australia's unique coastline. See Action Box item 1.

## Ecotourism workshop

A workshop titled 'Evaluating Ecotourism' was held last November at Port Douglas, Queensland. The interest in ecotourism (or interpretative nature-based ecologically sustainable tourism!) is high and in 1991 was responsible for the formation of the Ecotourism Association of Australia, the hosts of this gathering. The workshop was attended by 150 people, an unbalanced spread of tour operators, accommodation and land managers, tourism academics, government representatives and environmentalists.

The result was less like a workshop and more like a conference with a predefined outcome—not even the proposed accreditation system was endorsed. The Ecotourism Association is attempting to establish ethics and principles that will help to sustain this type of tourism. While this is to be applauded, nature-based tourism in general, and specifically ecotourism, has a long way to go before becoming ecologically sustainable.

For me, the workshop hosted at the site of a reclaimed wetland, and a conference dinner at a venue that desecrated an Aboriginal women's sacred bathing place, confirms the hypocrisy of the tourism industry. Fortunately, the collective concerns of those who attended the workshop may be enough to protect the goose that lays the golden egg.

With Tasmania hosting the World Congress on Adventure Travel and Ecotourism in November this year, interest in this subject is bound to increase.

*Andrew Cox*

## QUEENSLAND

### Starcke action

Further to the report in Green Pages (*Wild no 51*, page 25) on the Cape York Starcke land, the Wilderness Society has received legal opinion on the process by which George Quaid maintained control of the 225 000 hectare coastal land. John Greenwood, QC, in his advice regarding the legality of various steps which led to the acquisition by George Quaid Holdings of 24 200 hectares of land in the Starcke area, said: 'There is no doubt that Quaid was in breach of the development conditions...The conclusion that can be reached with some certainty is that further enquiries are warranted.' The embattled Queensland Government has sought its own QC's opinion for submission to Cabinet. See Action Box item 2.

### Coastline under threat

Of great concern to conservationists is a proposal to build a 2000-bed resort and a 250-berth marina at Oyster Point near Cardwell. The area concerned is between Hinchinbrook Island and Hinchinbrook Channel, both part of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. Access to the marina would require dredging of a channel and construction of a breakwater. Hostels, shops, bars and other facilities are also envisaged. The true scale of the project is hard to determine at this time as the final development plans have not yet been made public. There appears to have been no effort to assess the environmental impact of the resort on the World Heritage qualities of the surrounding area, but it is imperative that the final development plans become available for public comment. Readers are urged to write to the relevant authorities, making them familiar with the high value walkers place on Hinchinbrook Island and to express their concerns at the development, requesting that a full, public environmental impact assessment be initiated. See Action Box item 3.

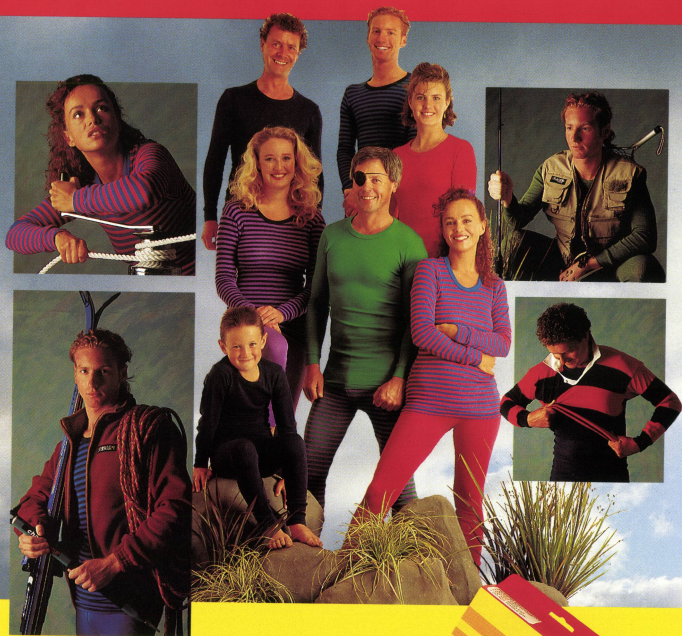
## NEW SOUTH WALES

### Wilderness Christmas gift unwrapped

The NSW Government's Christmas present in announcing the fate of ten wilderness nominations at the end of 1993 was covered in fancy wrapping and thick padding. Inside was little to smile about.

Only part of seven wilderness areas, 310 000 hectares in total, will be declared under the NSW Wilderness Act (Lost World, Washpool, Guy Fawkes, Macleay Gorges, Deua, Goodradigbee and Nadgee), most of which are in existing National Parks or reserves. Bindri, along with portions of Deua, Guy Fawkes and Washpool wilderness areas, is referred to the newly established Natural Resources Audit Council for a socio-economic analysis. A decision on Kanangra-Boyd wilderness area is deferred pending flood-mitigation works at Warragamba Dam and likely flooding (see *Wild no 49*, page 25, and the next item) while Binghi wilderness will not be declared, but protected by other means. A total of 200 000 hectares of wilderness has been rejected for declaration in addition to the 100 000 hectares referred to the NRAC.

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Following the assessment of nominations by the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service and subsequent public submissions in 1992, there was a long wait for this decision and during this period some wilderness areas were logged and mined and new roads constructed. A majority of public submissions, generally more than 70 per cent, supported declaration of all ten wilderness areas.

In announcing the decision, Premier John Fahey stated: 'We must ensure the best of our environment is protected as a gift for our grandchildren without jeopardizing the jobs of our parents.' The Wilderness Society expressed extreme disappointment at the announcement. It sees the decision as a guarantee of continued conflict in the State's wilderness areas.

While the declarations are an important step in preserving NSW wilderness, they fail to reduce the existing threats. For example, the declared Guy Fawkes wilderness on the Northern Tablelands excludes a travelling stock route following the Guy Fawkes River that cuts through the centre of the wilderness. Grazing and burning are permitted along the route. The Bicentennial Horse Trail has also been excised from the wilderness area. See Action Box item 4.

AC

## Kowmung Committee takes on Warragamba Dam

The Kowmung Committee is seeking people interested in helping the campaign to prevent Warragamba Dam being raised and two wilderness rivers in the southern Blue Mountains being flooded. The construction of a new flood-mitigation dam next to Warragamba Dam, up to 45 metres above the present stored water-height, would raise the level of Lake Burrangong during large flood events (see Green Pages, *Wild* no 49). As a result, seven kilometres of the Kowmung River (to just below Ti Willa Creek) and twelve kilometres of the Cops River (reaching above Kanangra Creek and Konangaroo Clearing) would be inundated for extended periods. The Kowmung River is one of the last free-flowing freshwater rivers in eastern Australia and, together with the Cops River, traditionally one of the most popular areas for bushwalking in the Blue Mountains.

The committee believes that the flood-mitigation works should avoid raising stored water-levels either temporarily or permanently. Full details of the Water Board's proposal and environmental impact statement are expected to be released soon. See Action Box item 5.

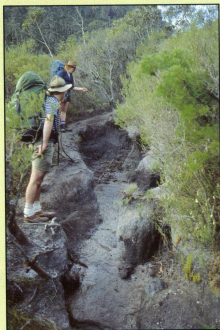
AC

## Helicopters grounded

The NSW Environment Protection Authority has halted helicopter flights from Katoomba airfield after it found that the operator did not have a licence under the *Pollution Control Act*. The helicopter flights have been controversial, with many bushwalkers and tourists writing to complain of the low-flying helicopters in the Blackheath area. The EPA, the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service and the NSW Tourism Commission are working to develop guidelines for helicopter operations over the Blue Mountains.

In a parallel move, the Civil Aviation Authority is moving to develop 'Fly Neighbourly Agreements' to control joy-flight operations over National Parks. The experimental area for these agreements is Kakadu National Park. The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs has expressed concern at flights over Blue Mountains and Kosciusko National Parks and will be urging an early extension of the agreements to include these areas.

Roger Lembit



Severe gully erosion on the walking track to Castle Saddle, Budawangs. Mike Dowd. Below, cartoon by Neil Matterson reproduced from *Black 'n' White 'n' Green* edited by George Hirst. (See Reviews.)



## Budawang erosion

The Monolith Valley area of the Budawang Ranges south-west of Nowra has been closed to camping for some time because, through over-use, the sensitive environment has been degraded. The track approaching Castle Saddle from the Yabboro River is also suffering severe degradation. Gully erosion on the final climb to the saddle has progressed to such a stage that the deeper erosion gullies could easily be mistaken for the tunnel through the Tail of the Castle. Bushwalkers are increasing the damage by creating new tracks round the worst section. Railway sleepers have now been placed on the track, presumably in preparation for remedial control measures.

Walkers should refrain from trying to find alternative routes in the eroded sections.

Besides, to reach this part of the track, walkers have already had to do much scrambling round and over obstacles. This section is just another obstruction to be tackled, not by-passed.

Mike Dowd

## Deua wilderness news

The beautiful Deua wilderness area, well known to readers of *Wild*, includes most of the Deua National Park and parts of the adjacent Dampier, Badja and Tallaganda State Forests. The Wilderness Society is campaigning to have protection extended to include those parts of all three State Forests threatened by logging. Current logging in the area is in contravention of the National Forest Policy Statement, which requires old-growth forest and wilderness to be given protection from logging activities until a national forest reserve system is created.

Alternatives to logging the Deua wilderness suggested by conservationists include using pine plantations which are located further south in the Eden and Tumut management areas. Additional eucalypt plantations can be established on agricultural land already cleared. See Action Box item 6.

## VICTORIA

### Koala cull

According to an academic at a leading Melbourne university, some areas in the State are so over-populated with koalas that they should be culled by the use of barbiturates. At Tower Hill, near Warrnambool, the koalas are running out of trees on which to feed. The Australian Koala Foundation claims that these suggestions are outdated and believes the problem lies in the fact that there are too few trees, not too many koalas. Over the last 100 years, two-thirds of the habitat of the koala have been destroyed. At this stage, at least, the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources has ruled out culling but there is obviously a problem, and the AKF agrees that koala management must be urgently



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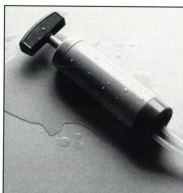
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reviewed. Koalas have already been moved from places including French Island and Sandy Point near Wilsons Promontory. Let us hope that culling of the koala, one of the symbols of this country, is not the answer, particularly given the decimation of the koala population in the New South Wales' bushfires in January.

### Alpine resorts news

In response to a feature on ABC Television in October last year, the Victorian National Parks Association has called on the Victorian Government to place a moratorium on the expansion of Victoria's ski resorts until appropriate measures have been taken to improve the environmental management and future planning of the State's much criticized alpine resorts.

The programme focused on environmental degradation and the viability of the ski industry's future. The VNPA is calling on the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources to implement the necessary measures to improve management and planning of the resorts. These measures include the rehabilitation of degraded sites, the formation of groups based on the 'Landcare' and 'Friends' model to assist in this rehabilitation, an independent public enquiry into measures to be taken to ensure the future ecological and economic sustainability of the alpine resorts, and a strengthening of the powers of the DCNR so that they can approve, and if necessary veto, any works within the resorts considered to be unacceptable. See Action Box item 7.

### East Gippsland logging protests

On 19 November 1993 over 300 people halted logging of old-growth forest on the edge of the Errindundra National Park, East Gippsland, at the start of their 'summer of protest'. The peaceful demonstration began with a 'funeral procession' which symbolized the death of the forest and its species of flora and fauna. A delegation was also sent to Canberra to call for the immediate cancellation of export woodchipping licences. According to the East Gippsland Forest Alliance, up to 79 per cent of the trees felled end up as woodchips. (See the article on Tasmanian logging in *Wild* no 51.)

In fact, according to a document published by the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources in its Statement of Resources, Uses and Values, 'mature/overmature forests generally yield C+ to D-logs in the ratio 1:4.5'. In simple terms this means that only 18 per cent of old-growth forest coupes will end up as sawn timber.

On 22 December the Federal Government re-signed export woodchip licences for 1994, allowing woodchippers the right to destroy another two million trees in the next year to export five million tonnes of woodchips to Japan. Immediately, the EGFA announced that it would continue its blockades of the East Gippsland forests for the remainder of the summer. 'The EGFA will now implement the National Forests Policy itself, by protecting the old-growth forests of East Gippsland through blockading, seeing Ross Kelly has abandoned this responsibility', Fenella Barry (the Wilderness Society spokesperson) said. See Action Box item 8.

### Out of the box

Only a tiny 15 per cent remains of northern Victoria's box-ironbark forests after 140 years of gold-mining and timber harvesting. And new State Government legislation, debated recently in Parliament, may mean that the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources will have no right to refuse unsuitable operations or to set conditions on 'unrestricted' crown land, and codes of practice will be repealed and may no longer be legislatively enforceable. This may mean 'open slather' mining in the State's northern forests.

### Alpine National Park horse-riding

A new system of permits applying to horse-riding groups in the Alpine National Park has been released. According to a press release by the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources regarding the Bogong High Plains region, groups of five riders or fewer need not obtain a permit, so that riders are encouraged to ride in smaller groups. The press release also outlines the places where horses are not permitted (the summits of Mts Bogong and Feathertop) and at what times of the year horses are permitted on the plains. The document further contains advice on minimal-impact riding, on camping, and on hut and horse-yard etiquette. While many walkers and environmentalists believe that horses (and other hard-hoofed animals for that matter) should not be permitted in the sensitive alpine environment, it is encouraging to see that at least there is a 'code of ethics' being encouraged by the DCNR in regard to horse-riding in the Alps. Let's hope the horse-riding parties will observe the code! Further information can be gleaned from *National Parks Horse Riding Code*, published by the DCNR in conjunction with various other authorities.

### Setting an example

While cattle, horses and loggers (in particular) have borne the brunt of conservationists' arguments in regard to the Alps, it is time to give some irresponsible walkers a 'kick up the butt'. It seems that the area around Federation Hut (Mt Feathertop), a 'Fuel Stove Only' area for some years, has been the scene of numerous camp fires, particularly of late. The heavy snowfalls of the early 1990s damaged trees and led to masses of dead snow-gum limbs lying about in an area that had been completely denuded of firewood. How can walkers try to educate others using the Alps to do the right thing if many of them refuse to obey mountain laws themselves?

## TASMANIA

### More development in Tasmania's wilderness

The concept of big tourist development in Tasmania's wilderness is nothing new. The latest attack is upon the Melaleuca/Bathurst Harbour region in the South-west of the State. The Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service is currently drafting a management plan for the area, or in reality a Liberal Government development plan. This was initiated after stiff opposition to a proposed lodge on the shore of Melaleuca Lagoon. An advisory

committee has been established which invites public participation, but ultimately the final decisions will be made by the minister of the day. The initial format of the meetings was caught up in the technicalities of the proposals rather than their suitability to the region. The International Union for Conservation of Nature strongly recommends that the region be appended to the adjacent World Heritage Area. As a result the developers are eager to invest while they can. There are already bizarre proposals, such as for a floating hotel. A society called 'Friends of Melaleuca' is battling to restrain these developments but it may need your help. A \$20 supporter's membership is welcome. See Action Box item 9.

Ted Mead



The degraded and barren landscape for which Queenstown, Tasmania, has become well known. Glenn Tempest

### Mining clean-up aborted

It may sound strange, but when a mining company recently tried to revegetate an area devastated by acid rain caused by the company's copper smelter near Queenstown, the Tasmanian Government, with local support, ordered the company to stop. Revegetation was halted and the company was prevented from spraying fertilizer on native seedlings it had planted. Any credibility the Australian mining industry had as an environmental manager will be at risk because of the action of the Tasmanian Government. Apparently, the barren hills reflect the town's history and heritage.

### Tarkine wilderness news

One of the greatest immediate threats to the unprotected wilderness of Tasmania's north-west is the proposed Heemskirk road in the Tarkine region, intended to link the north-west coast to the west-coast highway by an almost direct route between the Norfolk Range and the immense Savage River rain forest. Such a road would sever this magnificent wilderness area and threaten the integrity of the rain-forest regions to the east. Ostensibly a tourist road, it is in reality a developmental access road, free of charge for the mining and logging industries. The Wilderness Society has launched a draft World Heritage proposal for the Tarkine wilderness rain-forest region of approximately 350 000



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hectares. It is going to need your support to see it through.

Two promotional items have been released to help to protect the Tarkine wilderness. The first is *Tarkine Paner*, a 22-minute video which displays the Aboriginal cultural significance, and the diverse and spectacular nature of the Tarkine region. The other, *Tarkine Trails*, is a walking-guide that briefly describes the inspirational wonder of the threatened mountains, forests, beaches and rivers of the Tarkine area. It also contains notes on short walks, long slogs and on rafting. See Action Box item 10.

TM

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

#### Oil-drilling near Ningaloo Reef

On 26 November last year a major protest was staged against an oil company (which was about to start explorational drilling only eight kilometres outside the Ningaloo Marine Park) by Greenpeace and the Ningaloo Preservation

## GREEN PAGES

Association. According to Greenpeace campaigner Michael Bland: 'Western Australia has marine areas of world significance such as Ningaloo Reef and the Exmouth Gulf...These areas need to be urgently protected from mining and drilling just as the Great Barrier Reef has been.' (In October last year, the Queensland Government passed legislation preventing any oil-drilling in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.) See Action Box item 11.

### OVERSEAS

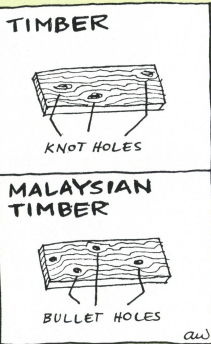
#### Malaysian chain-saw massacre

Over 80 per cent of Australia's tropical-timber imports originate from Malaysia, a country where the government uses military force to break up any resistance to logging. While people still think it is possible to buy

### Action Box

Readers can take action on the following matters covered in Green Pages in this issue.

- 1 To register your support for CoastWalk on the petition, telephone 0055 31 987.
- 2 For further information on matters concerning the Starcke land, contact Michael Winer at the Wilderness Society, Cairns. Telephone (070) 41 2066.
- 3 Write to the Minister for Environment & Heritage, Molly Robson, 160 Ann St, Brisbane 4000, and the Premier, Wayne Goss, Executive Building, 100 George St, Brisbane 4000.
- 4 Express your disappointment in the decision by writing to the Premier of NSW, John Fahey, Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney 2000.
- 5 Join the campaign by contacting the Kowmung Committee at GPO Box 2090, Sydney 2001, or telephone (02) 690 1059.
- 6 For further information on logging in the Deua wilderness, contact Tom McLoughlin at the Wilderness Society, Sydney. Telephone (02) 267 7929.
- 7 For further information, contact Doug Hermann at the Victorian National Parks Association. Telephone (03) 650 8296.
- 8 For further information on logging in East Gippsland, and appropriate protest action, contact Jill Redwood at the East Gippsland Forest Alliance, Geongerah. Telephone (051) 54 0156.
- 9 Write to the Friends of Melaleuca, PO Box 59, Sandy Bay 7006, for further information.
- 10 Write to Bob Brown, 130 Davey St, Hobart 7000, for further information, or telephone (002) 34 9366.
- 11 Michael Bland, of Greenpeace Australia, can be contacted for further information. Telephone (02) 211 4066.
- 12 You can find out more about logging in Sarawak, Malaysia, by contacting the Rainforest Information Centre, PO Box 368, Lismore, NSW 2480. Telephone (066) 21 8505.



sustainably produced tropical timber in Australia, the fact is that sustainably produced timber (from ecoforestry projects in Papua New Guinea) is not on the market yet. At Sarawak last year, 300 soldiers, police, logging-company employees and forestry officials brutally broke down a peaceful blockade intended to slow down the logging in one of the few remaining homelands of the Penan, one of the last tribes of nomadic hunter-gatherers on earth. The Penan and other tribes people of Malaysia are in the front lines of the battle to protect what we all need for survival, but they are treated like the worst criminals. With the lack of action from the Australian Government despite constant lobbying, it seems that it's up to us as individuals to do what we can—at the very least to ensure that we aren't involved in the destructive tropical-timber trade. See Action Box item 12. ■

Anja Light

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.



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# RIP ENRICHMENT

A novel approach, by Quentin Chester

A steamy summer morning and my companion and I are stretched out by a creek in the shade of a sandstone overhang. We had planned to traverse a ridge flanking the Hawkesbury River and then back-track along the water's edge to our boat. Instead we find ourselves ensconced in a cool nook, barely half-way along the ridge.

Some people might be infuriated by such indolence. Aren't we going to miss out on the 'rounded' experience? What about the fine views of the river further along the ridge? Or the simple satisfaction of completing what we set out to achieve?

Well, yes, but forays into the bush need not always follow a set timetable. Nor do they have to be mindless marches in which the imperative to reach a destination blinkers your response to a place. Just occasionally it's good to do more travelling than arriving. And often this means being more 'gung-whoa' than 'gung-ho'.

In this regard my companion for today's outing could not be better. Though well equipped to travel fast and light, he's also open to sharing some contemplative time in the wilds. So we pass the morning exchanging thoughts and mulling over a few memories.

Finding the right company is often the key to making your back-country excursions varied and diverting. As an inveterate stop-start walker my trips typically feature brief bursts of forward progress interspersed with extended bouts of sloth and musing. My assorted companions, while not exactly like-minded, are at least similarly prone to lengthy pauses when they photograph, paint, scribble or peer into the shrubbery through their binoculars.

A congenial group can of course do more than give you the scope to pursue a pet obsession. Even those with the most rudimentary social skills tend to find that the enforced intimacy of life out of doors can stimulate the lapsed art of conversation. This can lead to rowdy camp-fire debates, tall tales and aimless philosophizing. Indeed, for many travellers their rationale for going bush is avowedly social: to practise the rituals of friendship or simply to meet people outside the drab routine of life in the big smoke.

Pre-departure research can also enhance your trip. This might be as simple as 'sussing out' the prime campsites or pin-pointing the best swimming holes. Then again it could take a more arcane approach, like deciding to retrace the footsteps of obscure 19th century

explorers, or choosing to go (peacefully) in search of some exotic wildlife.

For this particular outing I gleaned some useful knowledge from a conversation overheard a few weeks back at the local marina. An elderly but nimble-looking gent was extolling the virtues of a certain creek system he had stumbled upon during a walk with friends. I took some mental notes of its whereabouts. He also talked with informed enthusiasm about the creek's plant life, rattling off a list of scientific names: *Blandfordia nobilis*, *Isopogon anemonifolius* and *Actinotus hianthi*—things

I only knew as Christmas bells, drumsticks or flannel flowers.

Now, from the shadows of the overhang, I can indeed marvel at the array of things vegetable that flourish along the creek. Had I come equipped with a botanical guidebook or, better still, a companion wise in matters floristic, I could have devoted a contented hour or three familiarizing myself with the local undergrowth.

Learning a little of the land is surely one of the most compelling reasons for going bush and perhaps the most noble excuse for dallying rather than passing blithely through.

In my present surroundings



Obviously, not everyone's idea of 'trip enrichment' is the same—these three are pictured enlightening themselves on the new toilet in the Western Arthur Range, Tasmania. *Ted Mead*



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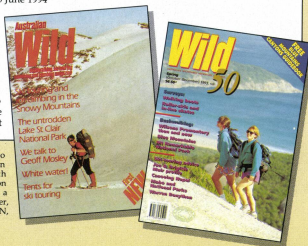
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The competition is called the *Wild* Subscription Lottery and promoted by Wild Publications Pty Ltd, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181. Every *Wild* subscription order, including phone orders, received between 18 March 1994 and 15 June 1994 will be eligible for these valuable prizes which will be drawn in Sydney on 22 June 1994.

The winners will be notified. Results will be published in *Wild* no 54, on sale in September. Prizes are not transferable or redeemable for cash. The first prize must be booked by Wild on behalf of the winner and charged to a special Wild account. The first-prize winner (and/or his or her family) must

have completed the free travel before 23 September 1994, so start planning your big trip now! The judges' decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.



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there is no shortage of engaging lines of inquiry.

Beyond the abundance of plants at hand it would also be intriguing, for instance, to know more about the origins of the local land-forms. Our eminently comfortable overhang could thus be seen as just one of countless similar shelters in a region defined by its extensive sandstone outcrops, plunging canyons and monolithic waterfront boulders scoured by time and tide.

We might also begin to appreciate that the Hawkesbury sandstone gives rise to all sorts of life—quite literally in the case of a pair of sea eagles we see cruising on up-draughts over the cliffs opposite. With a decent pair of binoculars we could follow their flight and perhaps, if we were lucky, spy a nest cradled in the arms of a large angophora down at the shore line.

Sharpening one's observations of the natural world means heeding the signs and becoming attuned to your surroundings. In other words, find a good vantage point, employ some stealth and be patient. An appropriate field guide is an advantage, but by taking a few photographs or jotting down a description, the species in question can be considered when reference books are closer to hand.

As you delve into your environs one encounter tends to lead to another. These are the connections that often become significant, whether they be the extraordinary inter-relationships within a particular plant community or the pointers to a deeper heritage.

Earlier in the day, during the climb up the steep spur from the boat, I glimpsed two black-tailed swamp wallabies grazing in a gully of banksias. Then, a few strides later, as I caught my breath on a leaf-strewn stone pavement on the crest of a ridge, I discovered images of these same creatures engraved into the rock by the Koori-gai people centuries earlier. Now, looking out from the overhang, I try to imagine gazing down at the longboats from the *Sirrus* pushing up-river on a similar afternoon 205 years ago.

You can make your bid for posterity by cobbling together some record of your days in the field, be it with a camera, sketch-book or diary.

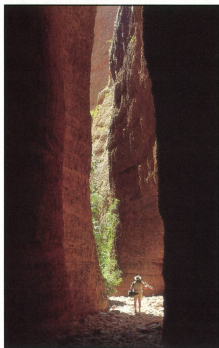
One approach to keeping a diary is to make it a loose miscellany of notes, rough pencil sketches and occasional thoughts. This avoids tedious summaries of the 'woke at daybreak, had breakfast and packed up' variety. It also helps to preserve the spontaneity of the moment and to highlight quirky details or isolated incidents. An inventory of birds sighted or plants identified can be merged with your impressions of the locale, a commentary on the unseasonable weather or, if you so desire, a diatribe on the unseemly personal habits of your companions.

Finding the time to keep up even the most informal diary can be a problem on a busy trip. It is little wonder then that for most people photography is the preferred option for documenting their outdoor experiences. Beyond taking memorable holiday snaps, photography can also lead you to examine the natural landscape with a more discerning, creative eye.

## WILD IDEAS

If I'd thought to bring a camera I could have captured the view upstream, where the river arcs between high bluffs and mangrove flats or, as I fossicked along the creek, taken close-ups of the sculptured sandstone reflected in the water-holes.

Venturing into the wilds can indeed encompass a lot more than a headlong dash to your destination. But there is a risk that too diligent an interaction with a place can get out



A place to be enriched—Bill Rudock amid the grandeur of Echidna Chasm, Bungles Bungles, Western Australia. *Stuart Grant*

of hand. One acquaintance of mine is religiously up and about before first light to start his photography. Throughout the day he scribbles copious notes about the terrain and wildlife. Come lunch-time he's thrashing with his camera again or off making recordings of the bird songs and waterfalls. In the evening, after a quick bowl of gruel, he heads for the tent to slave over his diary, or peer at maps with a head torch.

Retaining your perspective on things doesn't, however, necessarily mean rigidly dividing work and play. They can, in fact, be integrated. With advances in portable technology it's becoming increasingly feasible to perform a host of work-related exercises in the wide open spaces.

The light is fading and out on the river the tide is on the turn. It's time to go. My friend and I file away our thoughts. With the flick of a switch his screen goes blank, I close his lid and stow him in the rucksack for the descent to the boat. We may not have 'done' the ridge but I've enjoyed another productive day in the wilds with my lap-top companion. ■

*Quentin Chester* (see Contributors in *Wild* no 3) is a free-lance writer who specializes in outdoor topics. He is originally from Adelaide and lived for some years in exile on the Hawkesbury River, New South Wales, dreaming of the Flinders Ranges. He recently returned to Adelaide. He wrote *The Kimberley—Horizons of Stone*, reviewed in *Wild* no 48.





# HIGH IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Trekking in the Indian Himalayas, with Judy Parker

A grey day in a drab, depressing bus station—this was the Himachal border town of Paonta Sahib, January 1981. Several hours later, on my grinding 221 kilometre journey by local bus from Dehra Dun to Simla, the merest hint of distant Himalayan peaks floated momentarily on a winter horizon dank with swirling snowflakes. What an inauspicious introduction to the northern Indian State of Himachal Pradesh and its trekking delights!

Since then, many of my arrivals in Himachal have been even more weather-besieged. In fact, the major hurdle to achieving the high points of Himachal, especially in the trekking season, are the monsoons. Himachal is battered by monsoons for a good two months every summer. Most of my Himachal trek experiences seem to have coincided with the earliest/heaviest/latest/most unseasonal monsoonal downpour period the region has ever known! This makes you treasure glimpses of the Himalayan mountains even more.

The cloistered valley of Kulu, the jewel of Himachal, presents a particular challenge. It was necessary to set the airfield of Bhuntar low down in the 120 kilometre long valley to obtain enough room for a landing-strip for even a small plane. Launched by the Government of India to link remote areas, Vayudoot is a modest airline. Flights seem to be cancelled more often than not in the turbulence of summer. The lip of the valley is stitched by the tight Larji Gorge where, during monsoonal torrents, trucks carrying the vital fruit produce of Kulu can be held up for days by landslides. My August 1985 flight for a reconnaissance trek into the Himachal hinterland by way of the Kulu valley was halted promptly at Chandigarh airport by storms ahead. We had to resort to old Ambassador taxis, grinding late into the night in a slurry of mud through the



Avalanche below Roberts Peak, Kulu Range. **Right**, a Gaddi shepherd's daughter in the Chandra valley. Both photos Matt Darby

Siwalik foothills. We became holed up in Mandi, in a dingy ex-Raj palace-cum-hotel, while monsoonal rain sheeted down for 48 hours. Meanwhile, directly ahead, the Mata Hanogi Hindu temple at the mouth of the Larji Gorge slipped quietly into the surging river taking its worshippers with it. It was not until our third evening after leaving Delhi that we finally limped, exhausted, into our Mecca, Manali.

Many people consider Manali, situated at the secluded head of the Kulu valley, to be the hub of Himachal. In fact, with the troubles in Kashmir over the last three seasons, hotels have sprouted abundantly in Manali and it has become the desired destination of southern Indian tourists. Few of these penetrate Himachal beyond a car trip up the nearby Rhotang Pass, where they teeter in flimsy saris and sandals amid the melting snow-drifts.

Staying just above the Manali township in the fine old wood-panelled guest-house of an Anglo-Indian elder statesman of the town (an heir of the British pioneering orchardists), I have loitered many an afternoon on the broad upstairs balcony somnolent in an orchard heavy with autumn fruit, tempted by his offers of trekking destinations. I sample trek tales and Indian curries with my local friends Iqbal and Indra in their tiny trekking shop in the main street. I gossip late into the evenings in the Johnston House with Paddy, an eccentric ex-army captain who treks the ranges thoroughly. (During my stay in 1987 he had just laid to rest in a high pasture the body of Penelope Chetwode, author of *Kulu—The End of the Habitable World*. The widow of British poet Sir John Betjeman, she had wandered Himachal tirelessly in her youth there in the 1920s.) I chat with a Swiss anthropologist who has, every year for a decade, trekked to outlying villages to tease out the dark secrets of the





Hadimba Devi pagoda-style temple set deep in a dark forest of deodars. I call on trekking contacts in Duff Dunbar, the grand mansion built in local Pahari style, once home of the far-sighted Scottish forestry officer who craftily preserved this magnificent forest of Dhungrri as a 'national monument'.

Periodically I wander the village of the old town of Manali with its glorious wooden houses and its left-over hippies drifting aimlessly among the hedges of marijuana. I trudge to Vashisht beyond the Beas River where trident-bearing Hindu Saddhus retreat to balconied Hindu shrines. They are recuperating from the heady Kulu Dussehra parading the gods on 'raths'. I am invariably recovering from my treks in the beckoning north as I lounge in the nearby sulphurous hot springs. I visit the elaborate wood-carved temples of Jagatsukh 20 kilometres away, and Nagar, a former capital of Kulu, with its imposing 16th century castle. I tour the nearby 'Hall', its walls festooned with wistaria and Virginia creeper. Built by Colonel Rennick in the 1880s, the Hall is now a gallery exhibiting the art works of its ex-owner, the Russian professor Nicholas Roerich.

Besides these engrossing day walks a number of long treks radiate from Manali. My first trek out from Manali was in the mid-1980s as a member on one of Garry Weare's reconnaissance treks for the text of his guidebook *Trekking in the Indian Himalaya*. This journey became a sheer epic—several weeks of inexorably penetrating further north into the allure of central Asia day by day.

Over the Rhotang (Pass of the Bones) we had proceeded up the Chandra valley, halting on our fifth day to acclimatize at the height of 4330 metres at Chandertal, a superb lake set in meadows of edelweiss. Vivid memories spring to mind of long afternoons watching slow-moving flocks of sheep fanning over the alpine pastures and reflected in the still lake; and of lingering in the reeds in grassy melt-water hollows to film pairs of brahmany ducks poised on their migrations south from Tibet. Here at Chandertal we paused to shoe our squad of 18 horses in readiness for the rocky, ill-defined tracks of the Phitse La which cross into Zaskar far ahead. In the lee of the Gaddi shepherds we left Lahoul, this northern region of Himachal, by way of the Baralacha La, 5300 metres, a twin pass over the Great Himalayan Range. This pass, allegedly the one crossed by the Tibetan lama in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, now accommodates the military road from Manali to Leh—a remarkable 482 kilometre engineering feat spanning several passes above 5000 metres.

Five years later, accompanied by an enterprising British explorer, I made a second crossing on foot of this Great Himalayan Range, further west, back

into Himachal. Pounding storms lashed Lahoul for our entire three-day descent, since we had crested the desolate Shingo La (5096 metres) from arid, high-altitude Zaskar. The Shingo La is notorious for its bad weather; in fact Michel Peissel, the modern-day French adventurer, described this pass in his book *Zaskar—The Hidden Kingdom* as 'a frigid hell rather than the abode of the gods'. When we

ten-day Shanti Devi teachings of the Dalai Lama. We hastened back to Manali from our trek to Beas Kund (the small, holy Hindu Lake at 4000 metres—the headwaters of the mighty Beas River which has carved out the Kulu valley) to join the devout. The Dalai Lama was housed humbly in the Nehru Circuit House. Every morning from his modest Jeep he would cheerily return our wave



Local girls in the village of Spera, Chamba region. **Right:** Gaddi shepherds at work beside Chandertal, 'a superb lake set in meadows of edelweiss'. Both photos Judy Parker

were there the pulley bridge over the Bhaga River had already been dismantled for the impending winter. Consequently, we had to descend the last long day blanketed in heavy mist on the 'wrong' side of the river, sliding through the viscous mud hillside. We edged over a risky remaining ice-bridge and lower forded, waist-high, an angry stream where two local porters had been pounded to death the day before. Even the earthen floor on which we slept that night in a hut at the road-head of Darcha was submerged by floodwaters, and the Bailey bridge, swinging limply, was awash.

One summer of unexpected sunshine we suddenly learned that our journey in Himachal was to coincide with the

as we wound down the steep street to his teachings in the Buddhist gompa. The text of the Dalai Lama was simultaneously translated into the various dialects of the local groups from Tibet, Lahoul, Kinnaur and Spiti. Each group was seated in a separate compound radiating from the temple. It was in the foreigners' compound that my travel companion Rosemary misplaced her passport. But could we interest the local police in assisting her search? That day they were far too obsessed with listening to the gripping finish of the Australia versus India one-day cricket match. And when Australia won on the final ball, we could elicit no sympathy, let alone co-operation, whatsoever!

Simla, set in the south of the State, is in fact the capital of Himachal Pradesh. It was, after all, the summer capital of the British Raj. What high points of political diplomacy and high society have its

Scandal Point and Mall known! In 1901 Simla was linked to the plains by a narrow-gauge steam train toiling the 96 kilometres up from Kalka through a hundred tunnels. Simla's most glorious heyday occurred in exactly that period: tea dances at Davico's, the social club in the Green Room of the Gaiety Theatre, weekly gymkhanas and twilight strolls and assignations on the Ridge. Faletti's Cecil Hotel, the Gothic-style government buildings, the imperial Georgian manor houses—they all remain, but as faded echoes of a grand era. Many pleasant mid-altitude trails wander out of Simla into the Sutlej valley and the Inner and Outer Saraj. Monkeys crowd the trees, even pressing through the open windows of the hotels. On one long day's walk around the ridge trails of Simla below Jakhoo Hill and out past Wildflower Hall (once the country house of Lord Kitchener), we met a dear old man who delighted us with his memories of the Raj, concluding, 'Ah, Simla I have known it!'

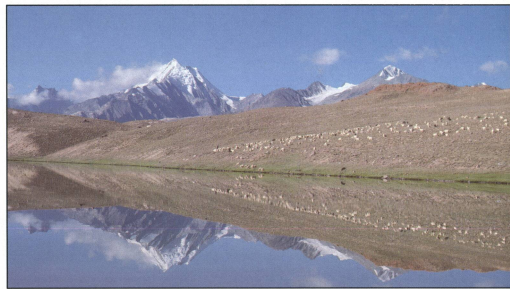
Only four years ago we encountered no other Westerner trekking in the Kangra and Chamba regions of southern Himachal. With a couple of friends I based myself in the beautiful hill town of Dharmasala where the Dalai Lama has been granted land by the Indian Government to set up his own Tibetan Government in exile. We had paused for several days at Dharmasala, warming up with long day walks to the ridge-edge bazaar of McLeod Ganj and the Tibetan Children's Village of Forsyth Ganj. Down an arcade of jacaranda trees in their peak of bloom we chanced upon the 140-year-

old Cathedral of St John in the Wilderness, for all the world straight out of deepest, greenest England. Here Lord Elgin, a Viceroy of India, lies interred in the peaceful churchyard surrounded by mossed Celtic crosses.

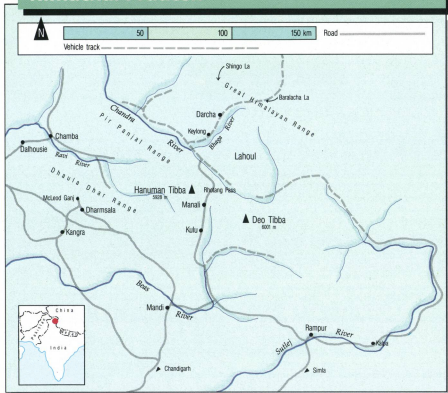
Further north is Dalhousie, the British Raj hill station named after the Governor-General of India, who in 1850 leased the hilltops from the Rajah of Chamba to use as a sanatorium site. Dalhousie straggles across the crests of five looped peaks. I escaped for several days to the Aroma-N-Claire hotel. Enveloped in memorabilia of the Raj, I learned from the proprietor of the inner valleys to the Sach and Pandari Passes, journeys completely untapped by the trekking world. The 54 kilometres spiralling down to low-

altitude Chamba we preferred to make on foot over two days, spurning the dangerous road journey. Midway, through hillsides white with shasta daisies, we found the attractive saucer-shaped lake of Khajjiar, ringed by luxurious forests of conifers. Completely cut off by a thunderous evening hail-storm, we spent the night on the floor of the Tourist Hotel, thronged with excitable Indian tourists.

Chamba clings to the upper bank of the surging Ravi River. Medieval-looking with its fascinating complexes of age-old Hindu temples surrounding a grassy maidan, Chamba seems rarely to have known a Western face. By completing a letter in triplicate expounding my love of forests I was able to procure a chit for one



## Himachal Pradesh



whole 'set'—one bedroom, one dressing-room, one dining-room and a rudimentary bathroom—in the grand Forest Rest House for the princely sum of \$1.12 a night. We lived on boiled eggs and abundant tropical fruits.

Seventy kilometres further into the Manimahesh Dhar Range the village of Bharmour, a mountain gem, is situated amid cascades of cultivated terraces. Here I stayed in the imposing wooden three-storey Mountaineering Institute for only \$1.00 a night, eating grandly with the director who was unused to Western guests. Late into the evening Gaddi shepherds and their flocks surged through the tenth-century temple complex below. Early the next morning, jammed into a crowded Jeep with 21 locals, I pressed through to Hardsar. It was a month too early for the climbing queues of Hindu pilgrims bound for Lake Manimahesh, which, at 4200 metres, is tucked below the inspiring peak of Manimahesh Kailash. I paused at Dancho for a clutch of Tibetan roadworkers to bridge the raging spring snow-melt torrents with spars of felled conifer trees in readiness for the pilgrims. Six amateur Bengali climbers the day before had found the residual snow



## Himachal Pradesh; facts for trekkers

Bordered by the Indian States of the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Jammu and Kashmir, and by Tibet to the north-east, Himachal Pradesh covers an area roughly one-eighth of the size of Victoria.

Thirty-one former Princely States were drawn together to form the embryonic Himachal Pradesh in 1948. It did not achieve full statehood until 1971, five years after the inclusion of the Hill Districts of Kangra, Kulu, Lahoul-Spiti and Simla.

Himachal Pradesh covers a diversity of landscape from subtropical undulating hills in the south, through the low Siwalik foothills averaging 1500 metres, the considerable Pir Panjal and

### People and culture

The population of Himachal is overwhelmingly of Aryan/Hindu extraction. The name of the Kinnaur region, for example, is derived from the Pauranic Kinners, the ancient minstrels who performed in the celestial court of the gods Shiva and Parvati. The Lahoul/Spiti area, however, marks the southern limit of the influence of Tibetan/Mongolian ethnic types and the religion of Buddhism. Apart from Hindi, English and Punjabi, the local language consists of multiple dialects of Pahari with its origins in Sanskrit.

There are over 2000 temples in the State, many magnificently carved. The Shiva Shakti cult

would choose to lurch round Himalayan corners with blinds drawn, viewing videos in preference to peaks? And ear-plugs are a must! Local buses, though cheap, stop more than they go. At times I have hired an Ambassador taxi direct from Delhi. Shared among several the cost may average about \$50 and one has more say over the route, the stops and the speed of the vehicle.

### Accommodation

Simla possesses several grand hotels, including two of the Oberoi chain. Dharmasala and Dalhousie offer many simple hotels, a few of them government-run. Manali has had a proliferation of new hotels of typical Indian type over the last couple of years to supplement its charming guest-houses. Centres such as Chamba and Kangra largely run only to local lodgings and in more isolated spots, such as Keylong in Lahoul, the hotels are just glorified tea-houses.

The high point of accommodation in Himachal is the plethora of government-run rest-houses—Public Works Department, Circuit, Forest and the like. Primarily designed to house touring local bureaucrats, if unoccupied these fully-furnished bungalows can be yours for the effort of advance application to the appropriate agency in writing (in triplicate). They are delightfully cheap and the chowkidar will cook for a song.

Note that a considerable proportion of the following material has been supplied to Wild by Raja Bhasin of Simla, Himachal Pradesh.

### Permits

Fortunately, permits are not required for most locations. Inner line restrictions in Kinnaur and Spiti were relaxed in March 1992. District authorities can now issue permits for these areas directly. Many of the peaks offer unrestricted climbing. The Himachal Pradesh Mountaineering Institute is located in Manali and conducts climbing courses. There are over 100 identified treks in Himachal. Porters cost from as little as 100 rupees a day; guides, 250 rupees.

### Maps

Three separate sheets of the Ground Survey Maps of India 1:250 000 cover Himachal Pradesh. These maps are available from Himachal Tourism offices in Simla and Delhi. More detailed maps (1:50 000) can be purchased from the Survey of India offices in Delhi and Chandigarh. Inevitably some official red tape is involved. Nest and Wings (Post Box 4531, New Delhi) publishes a trekking map of Himachal Pradesh.

### Useful addresses

India Tourist Office, 55 Elizabeth St, Sydney (telephone 02 232 1600).

India Tourist Office, 88 Janpath, New Delhi (telephone 0091 011 332 0005).

H P Tourist Office, Chandernagor Building, 36 Janpath, New Delhi (telephone 0091 011 332 5320).

### Further reading

*At Home in the Himalayas* by Christina Noble (Fontana, Glasgow, 1991).

*Complete Guide to Simla* by O C Sud (Maria Brothers, Simla, 1981).

*Explore Himachal* by Gian Chand and Manohar Puri (International Publishers, New Delhi, 1991).

*Himalayan Circuit—A Journey in the Inner Himalayas* by G D Khosla (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1989).

*Holiday and Trekking in Kulu-Manali* (Nest and Wings, New Delhi, 1992).

*Holiday Resorts of Himachal Pradesh* (Nest and Wings, New Delhi, 1981).

*Kulu—The End of the Habitable World* by Penelope Chetwood (Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1984).

*The Himalayas—Playground of the Gods* by M S Kohli (Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1983).

*Trekking in the Indian Himalaya* by Garrry Wear (Lonely Planet, Melbourne, second edition 1991).

*Treks and Passes of Dhaula Dhar and Pir Panjal* by S R Saini (1991). ■



Gaddi encampment in the Dhaula Dhar. Parker

Dhaulta Dhar ranges of about 4000 metres interspersed with temperate valleys, to the lofty Great Himalayan Range rich in 6000 metre peaks. Most of its slopes are wooded with a wealth of oaks and coniferous pines, spruces and firs. High-altitude Kinnaur and Lahoul, by contrast, are sparsely vegetated—a vast landscape of barren splendour.

The State is drained by the Sutlej, Beas, Ravi and Chenab, the bulk of the mighty rivers of the Punjab. The main ridge at Simla forms the watershed between the Ganges and the Indus.

It is estimated that 90 per cent of Himachal's population is dependent on agriculture—the valley floors tight with grain, tea plantations on the slopes in Kangra, potato cultivation in high Lahoul and soft fruits and apples in the Kulu valley. It is claimed that 140 000 sheep move through Manali each year on their way to the alpine grazing grounds.

### History

For many centuries BC the Aryans dwelt in the vicinity of the Himalayan peaks, which they considered to be the abode of their gods. Then, in the early 19th century, the British Raj began establishing its summer capital in Simla away from the heat of the plains.

The first Englishmen in Kulu were claimed to be the famous duo Moorcroft and Trebeck in 1820, ostensibly on a mission to bring Turkoman breeding stallions back to Bengal, but apparently covertly flirting with the Great Game of the World Powers in Asia. Kulu and Kangra were annexed by the British in the 1846 Sikh Wars to ensure a neutral zone. British settlers quickly moved into these two valleys, mainly to retire, and by the 1880s had cultivated a number of large estates. At the time of Indian independence in 1947 many were drifting home to England.

premonitions. Every village, it is claimed, has its own *devta* (patron god). Hindu pilgrims flock to holy sites, particularly high-altitude lakes such as Manimahesh. Religious *melas* (fairs) dot the calendar. The renowned Kulu Dussehra in October attracts 360 gods from the surrounding temples. At that time, the maidan is aglitz with tinsel. Traders from the plains sell all manner of commodities. Local agriculture products are proudly displayed.

Himachal Pradesh has a rich tradition of handicrafts, in particular the famous, exquisite miniature paintings of Kangra, along with woollen carpets, shawls and pattoos (heavy, checked saris).

### When to go

Pre-monsoon trekking from April to June is possible in the lower regions of Kangra, Chamba and Simla, while the higher passes are blocked with snow. During June and July trekking is possible in the Lahoul region beyond the influence of the monsoons. However, the best time for long traverses from low altitude through to the Great Himalaya and beyond into Zaskar is September to October after the monsoons are over and before the first snows.

### Transport

The closest airports to trek destinations in Himachal Pradesh are Simla, Bhuntar (50 kilometres down-valley from Manali) and Chandigarh, a further 250 kilometres distant. The nearest rail links are Kangra (splendid steam trains are available), Jogindernagar (55 kilometres from Mandi) and Pathankot (85 kilometres from Dharmasala). Simla is served by a whimsical narrow-gauge train from Kalka on the main line to Delhi. I have travelled on all these routes and enjoyed them greatly.

The overnight de luxe 'Hindi-movie' video coaches direct from New Delhi to most key towns in Himachal I cannot recommend so warmly. Who

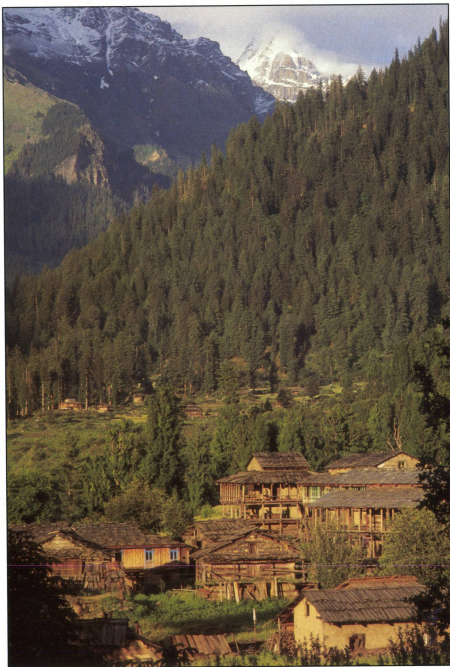
patches on the track too treacherous to proceed, but, trusty ski pole in hand, I trekked the final 13 kilometres beyond the deserted pilgrim hut. I circumambulated the lake still girdled with ice. Only ten minutes after my rapid lone dusk descent a large, roving brown bear was sighted crossing the track!

The ultimate high point for me in trekking in Himachal is accompanying the Gaddi shepherds. As all over central Asia, villagers from winter homelands on the plains or in the foothills in spring thread up to their 'zoned' summer grazing grounds. The local 'Phul' of Himachal hold the grazing rights to the pastures immediately above their villages. The Gaddi from Kangra, Mandi and Chamba, however, trek for a month or more, moving about eight kilometres a day, to spend a number of weeks on the remote, windswept plains, returning just in time to elude the first snows. They camp in rock-circle shelters roofed with rhododendron boughs or worn sheets of plastic. At times up to six different flocks encamp for the night within a kilometre. On these epic journeys, births, deaths and marriages in the life-cycles of the sheep and goats take place. The sheep often lamb on the return journeys, the shepherds habitually carrying the day-old lambs in saddle-bags on their ponies or draped as woollen scarves round their necks! Shearing takes place as the village is neared; jovial shepherds sing as they sit with the sheep embraced in their laps, legs trussed, and wield traditional hand shears.

Increasingly, it is only the older men with the young boys who are making these pilgrimages with their livestock. The strongest males remain in the villages for the harvest. The crops, unfenced, can ripen without concerns of wandering livestock. The sheep return to the stubble of winter, to be shelled in tiny barns or the lower storeys of the houses.

The Gaddi are resourceful. They bind their waists with up to 20 metres of strong, plaited, black woollen rope. Not only does this keep their kidneys warm, but it is invaluable for hauling fallen sheep from crevasses and cliff-edges. They carry dried edelweiss as tinder, and local flint and quartz stones in the inner pouches of their rough, woollen, woven tunics serve as fire-sticks. I have sat with them round their fires at dawn. A goat is milked directly into a squat brass urn which is heated for sugary tea on a modest twig fire. I shared heavy corn chapattis with a group one morning and how tempted I was, as a lone trekker, to respond to their invitation to join them on their journey winding laboriously up the demanding Kugti Pass over the Pir Panjal.

One trekking morning, sleeping in a high cave at Laka Ghot well up the Indrhar Pass over the Dhaula Dhar north of Dharmasala, I was awakened



The village of Pulga in the Kulu valley. *Raja Bhasin*

before dawn by the whistles and calls of the Gaddi. (The sheep respond to a repertoire of calls such that the Gaddi can actually call the flock from ahead rather than soothe them behind). The shepherds with their dogs were herding the sheep into a tight bundle to 'go over the top'. The Gaddi wore rough, knitted wool boots to grip on the snow-tongue protruding up the tight valley to the pass. Directly over the pass—the shaded side—we had been warned that a cornice of ice stretched precipitously. I learned that the Gaddi toboggan down on their woven jackets; the sheep slither as best they can! How I wanted to join them! By the time my two companions made ready the snow was too slippery to attempt the crossing. Our local Hindu guide was ecstatic. He had feared for his life in this dwelling-place of Durga, the goddess of

destruction. His multiple prayers, and coconut and incense offerings at rock shrines along the way, had been answered. He could turn back, freed from becoming the blood sacrifice demanded by Durga.


We were forced, instead, to take a detour for several days through a wonderland of magnificent untreked high-ridge forests of maple and rhododendron, the forest floor carpeted by myriad miniature strawberries, golden buttercups and tiny primulas. Such high points! But how I long to extend my Himachal high points still further—to Malana and the Saraj, the regions of Kinnaur and Spiti, the Pangri valley and the high Barabangahals. ■

*Judy Parker is an intrepid trekker of long and varied experience, an accomplished photographer and the author of several books on the Himalayas. She has travelled to many parts of the world and has worked as a trekking guide.*

# GROPING UP THE GORILLA

Tasmania's Federation Peak by a different route; with *David Noble*





**F**rom the base of Gorilla Ridge which leads up to near Federation Peak we looked in awe at what lay ahead of us. Food and time were running out so we had to push on tomorrow whatever the weather. I said to Norm, my sole companion, 'remember that the higher the scrub looks, the easier it is to get through', though without a great deal of confidence.

Earlier that day we had vacated an excellent, sheltered river campsite and struggled upstream through scrub and swamps to reach our present site. Friends had previously reported an indistinct cut track leading up the ridge to Geeves Bluff near Federation Peak. We hoped to use the track—but our friends had passed by more than ten years earlier and had described the track as badly overgrown even then.

The Old River Route to Federation Peak had been pioneered by Olegas Truchanus as an alternative to the more traditional Eastern Arthur and Moss Ridge routes. It is mainly a low-level route which starts from Bathurst Har-

bour and closely follows the course, where practicable, of the Old River from where it joins the harbour near to its source. The highlight and the crux of the route is the ascent, battling through the botanical horrors of the so-called Gorilla Ridge. Over the years, the route has been unpopular with walkers because of the difficulty of access to the start. Consequently no track has been formed by the passage of walkers.

Our own route to the Old River had been neither conventional nor straightforward. Tony Norman (Norm) and I had set out nine days earlier from the end of the Scotts Peak Dam road and walked by way of Junction Creek to Seven Mile Creek on the Arthur Plains. Here we grew bored waiting out the mandatory bad weather days at the foot of the Arthurs, eating to reduce our pack weights while Huey showed us that he could still be a bastard. On the third day, he relented. We shouldered our packs and, unused to exercise, struggled up Moraine K towards the summits of the Western Arthur Range. As we ascended,



The remarkable sight of mist pouring over the Western Arthur Range. David Noble. **Top right**, surveying the scrub near Gorilla Ridge. Noble. **Bottom right**, the moral of this story is 'don't buy expensive clothing'. A walker at Hanging Lake after bashing his way through the scrub on Gorilla Ridge. (Perhaps swinging from limb to limb is the answer!) John Chapman. **Pages 40 and 41**, no matter what time of day, the view of Federation Peak is nothing short of spectacular—this time it's at dawn. Chapman

we broke out of morning mist into the glorious fine weather that is spoken of in hallowed terms by experienced Southwest walkers. On our way up we passed another party descending, cursing the weather's perversity. 'Why had it bloody well fined up on the day we had to leave the range?' they asked.

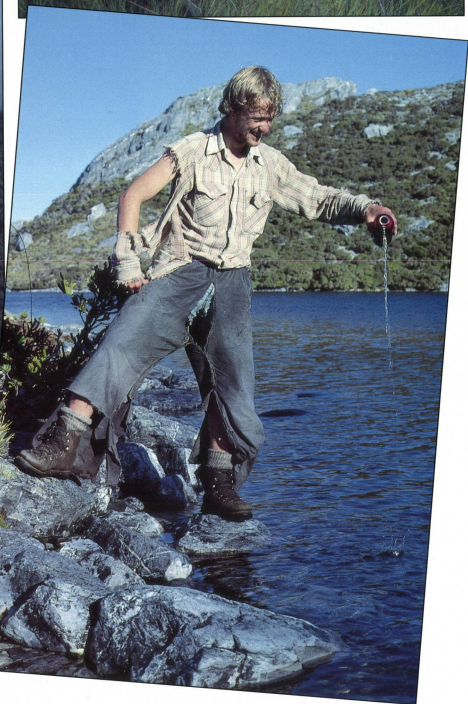
Tired but enthusiastic, we pushed on to an early lunch near the summit of Mt Aldebaran. Our plan was to descend south from here, over a lower, unnamed peak to the North River and from there climb up on to the rarely visited Norold

Range. Our next objectives were the Old River and then Federation Peak. The route had been planned with the aid of a few maps while sitting at home. But, like all sight-unseen routes, its execution proved more difficult than its design. I began to have second thoughts and even suggested to Norm that because of our delays, the planned walk was no longer feasible in the time remaining...and a leisurely traverse of the Western Arthur Range was a pleasant prospect...and didn't Haven Lake below us look an alluring place to camp... Norm would have no such heresy! He pushed off into the donga below, keen to make progress before nightfall. The descent to near the outlet of Lake Jupiter started with fairly open myrtle forest. Norm surged on, only pausing to put on his long pants and then, a few minutes later, to put on his gaiters and, a few minutes after that, to put on his leather scrub gloves. I followed suit. The scrub had changed

into a mixture of vines, rotten logs and cutting grass.

Night was falling as we reached the summit of an unnamed peak. Desperately we looked around for a campsite. There was nowhere suitable so we chose the least unsuitable place and strung the tent between a few low bushes and over some button-grass tussocks. We awoke to a great tidal wave of mist pouring over the Western Arthur Range. All that day we battled the scrub on our descent to the North River, avoiding the worst of it by following a creek. Horizontal scrub is less tiring to push through than bauera-tea-tree jungle, especially when the latter is intertwined with dead trees and cutting grass—a diabolical mixture. In the late afternoon we climbed out of the creek back on to the ridge and, after a short, nasty section of dead stick country, on to open button grass.

Relatively open terrain lay ahead of us over the next few days. We climbed up



open leads on to the pleasant tops of the Norold Range and spent our time peak-bagging and taking photographs. It was with regret that we left this rarely visited range and started to descend to the Old River. A day and a half of walking took us to the base of Gorilla Ridge where we made camp.

The next morning we awoke to brilliant sunshine. We donned our now battered armour of long pants, gloves and gaiters and set out. The vegetation soon changed from button grass to forest. We located the start of what we decided must be the track and forced our way up. Fortunately our packs were now much lighter than when we had started so we could concentrate on squeezing under, and struggling over, the vegetation that barred our progress. The track





was so difficult to follow that it really supplied only moral support—we lost it so frequently that our attempts to regain it took our minds off the scrub.

With relief we emerged on to an open flat terrace, the ramparts of Geeves Bluff towering above. Further up we could see that the scrub changed to scoparia—by far the least of the many Tasmanian scrub

Although we were tired, we knew that in the South-west it is best not to rely on the weather remaining clement. The day had been fine but already high cirrus clouds, so often the precursors of bad weather, were streaming over from the west. We dumped our packs near the outlet of Hanging Lake and quickly made our way along the Southern Traverse to the base of the final climb.

Both of us had climbed Federation Peak on previous South-west trips but the mountain has such allure that we enthusiastically scrambled up the cairned route to the top.

After a few moments to check the view, we left the summit and descended even faster than we had climbed. Hog's-back clouds were now forming over the lower Eastern Arthur summits; it was evident

**‘We awoke to a great tidal wave of mist pouring over the Western Arthur Range.’**

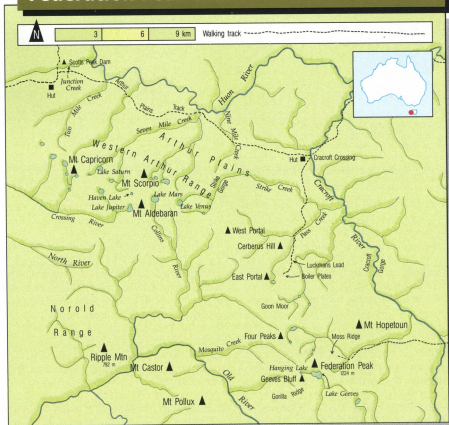
evils. Indeed, when we finally reached the scoparia band we found it relatively open and easy to walk through. We made good progress and were even able to shed most of our armour.

At last we approached one of the scree gullies that led towards the summit. Unimpeded now, and fit after all our walking, we raced up the final slopes. We surprised another group of walkers having a smoko on the summit of Geeves Bluff. They were resting before their planned descent to the Old River. When they saw us—clad now in shorts—they must have thought that the route down would be easy. We said nothing to disillusion them and even declared that Gorilla Ridge had been an easy stroll and that we would now climb Federation Peak in the remaining few hours of daylight.



Campsite in the scrub. **Noble.** **Opposite,** Tony Norman nearing the summit of Federation Peak. **Noble**

## Federation Peak area



that a storm was approaching. In quick time we made it back to Hanging Lake and chose the most sheltered campsite we could find. Despite the tent constantly flapping during the ensuing storm, we both slept very soundly after our exertions.

In strong wind, rain and thick mist we carefully followed the track down off the range the next day. The route over the Four Peaks and the Needles by way of Goon Moor is tortuous but fairly well marked. With the hoods of our parkas done up tightly we plodded on, only pausing on the descent of Luckmans Lead; to stare incredulously at a group of walkers battling up with packs that resembled skyscrapers. We both chuckled thinking about how they would have coped had they followed our route to the peak.

After sharing a cheerful New Year's Eve camp fire with some Hobart bushwalkers at Pass Creek we headed back along the Arthur Plains and eventually took the bus back to town. ■

*David Noble (see Contributors in Wild no 3) has been a Special Adviser to Wild from our second issue. He is one of the best-known bushwalkers in New South Wales and an authority on walking and canyoning in the Blue Mountains as well as a much-published wilderness photographer.*



# The COMFO Alternative

The Colo River, New South Wales, by Li-Lo; with *Brian Truran*

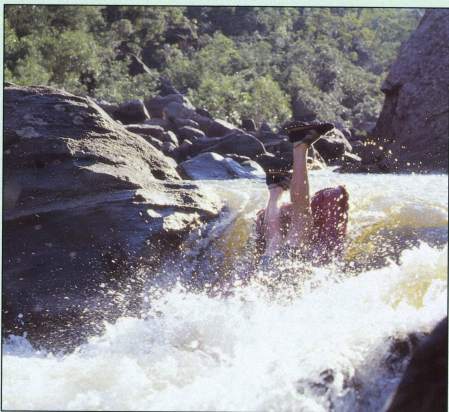
**T**he spectacular Colo River gorge near Sydney has made many a frustrated bushwalker sweat. Flanked by precipitous cliffs, relatively few access routes are available from the plateau country through which this watercourse has carved its way. Travelling through this hot gorge requires a considerable amount of rock-hopping and scrub-bashing, often made more unpleasant by the prevalence of spider webs, not to mention their occupants. The ridges have their little nasties too—bull ants that don't hesitate to bite.

On a weekend walk one December, Geoff Lewis and I encountered all the above-mentioned inconveniences. In fact, the combination of stifling heat and bull-ant bites made both of us ill. Vomiting and a 550 metre climb from the gorge floor meant that our normally sufficient supply of water soon ran out. By the time we reached the car we had plenty of incentive to sample the water from the windscreen washer; one and a half cups each—it couldn't have tasted sweeter!

Perhaps a weekend best forgotten, you might think. No fear! That weekend inspired what was to become one of our most exciting and memorable jaunts in the bush. We started wondering if there might be a more pleasurable way to appreciate the striking beauty and ruggedness of this immense wilderness. We had used Li-Los successfully in the tight canyons of the upper Wollangambe River and its tributaries and couldn't see any reason why they should fail us on a larger river like the Colo.

'Solo down the Colo on a Li-Lo' had a nice ring to it but the 'solo' part didn't sound too practical. Five of us returned after planning a 30 kilometre, three-day paddle down the Colo. Four of us had packed Li-Los and one tried a tiny blow-up raft (without a paddle). It had been raining for a few days and we wondered how this would affect the river level and our safety.

Quite a few old loggers' tracks and fire tracks off the Putty Road provide access to the Colo from the east. Heading down



The 'not so comfortable alternative'—negotiating one of the Colo's rapids head first. **Right**, judging by the expression on his face as he enters the rapids, our hero must have known his fate. *All photos Brian Truran*

the Grassy Hill fire track we were delighted to stumble upon one of those 'rare sights': a quail with four tiny chicks waddling along in pursuit. She spotted us soon after we spotted her, so went off in a flurry of feathers to draw attention away from her chicks.

The next morning, loaded with packs, we set off to Alidade Hill. We then headed for the tributary of the Colo just north of Alidade Hill by way of pass number 11 on Bob Buck's sketch map of this area. All went well until we found ourselves performing precarious gymnastics on slippery, wet rock. Proudly we reached the creek, only to notice what was obviously the correct pass 50 metres

upstream from the route on which we had been wasting our time.

Within half a minute the heavens opened and instinct, more than calculation, led us to a protected ledge for lunch and contemplation. There's nothing like hot chicken soup and cheese sandwiches to lift the spirits on a wet day.

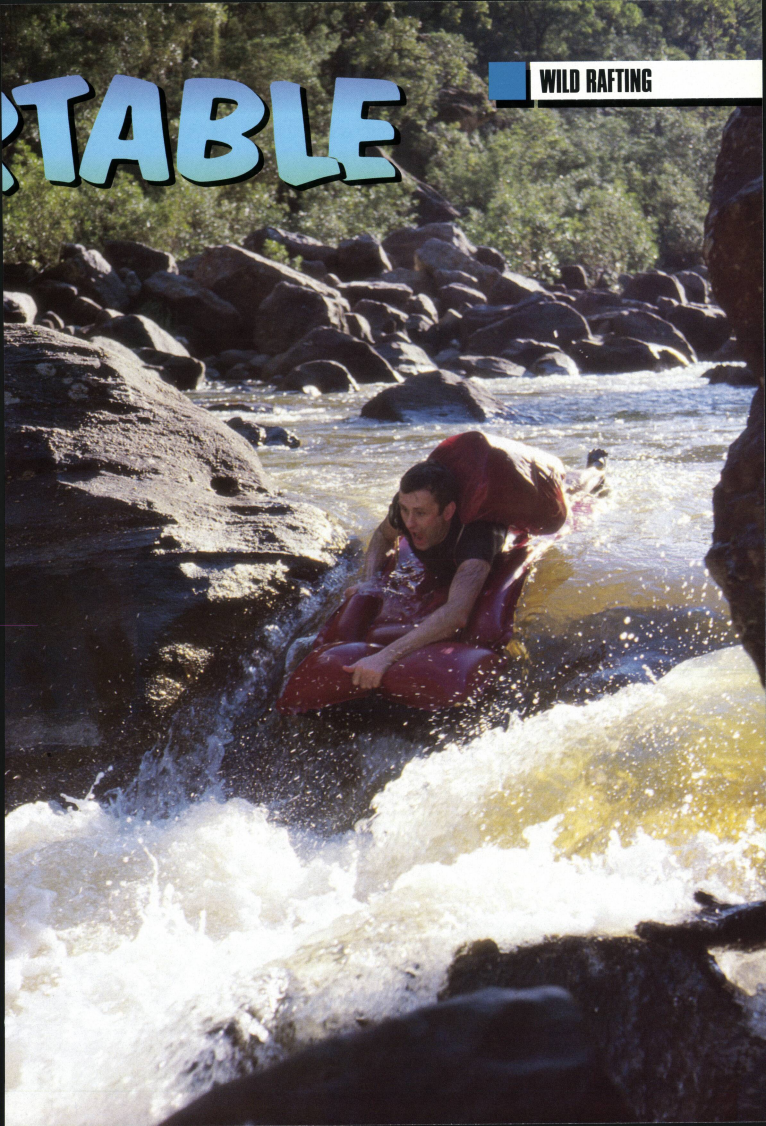
By the time the Colo was reached at 3 pm, we were more than just slightly behind schedule, but the sun was out and our gloom had vanished. The river was murky after the rain and carried an assortment of leaves and small bits of charcoal collected by the rising water. Slightly hyperventilated after blowing up the Li-Los too enthusiastically, we made our first splash and headed downstream.

We were on the river. The realization that we had finally begun what we had set out to do, Li-Lo the Colo, was



# STABLE

**WILD RAFTING**



satisfying indeed. A pair of black cockatoos screeched a welcome which echoed off the sandstone cliffs above. They escorted us for a while, providing entertainment, until we were diverted by the sound of our first rapid approaching. It was small but thrilling.

It became necessary to get out and scramble round a number of rapids. Sometimes this was because the boulders were so close together that it was impossible to squeeze through any openings. More often than not, though, we headed for the bank because the challenge of the fierce white water was too much for a humble Li-Lo. Portaging with just a pack and a Li-Lo was quick and easy compared with manhandling a canoe, so any inconvenience was soon discounted.

A friendly debate developed concerning the most efficient method of propelling a Li-Lo down the river. Geoff decided that he would strap his pack to the spare Li-Lo and tow it behind him by means of a leg-rope. That seemed fairly successful until, half-way through a set of rapids, Geoff went down one side of a boulder and the pack went down the other. Both came to an abrupt halt and the spare Li-Lo scored the only puncture of the trip.

Bill thought that he could do better by placing his pack at the front end of the Li-Lo, lie belly down and hang his legs out the back with flippers attached. The next set of rapids made quick work of a spectacular capsize, taking the skin off both his knees, stealing a thong and sinking a cutlery set. So much for 'minimal environmental impact'. (If anyone finds these items please return



This idyllic beach is at the junction of the Colo River with Canoe Creek. **Right**, relaxing on placid water on the way to the Colo River-Canoe Creek junction.

Before setting out on this trip we had managed to scrape together enough wet-suit gear for us to have at least one item each. This luxury was greatly appreciated as we started paddling our way downstream at 8 am on Sunday morning. The water was cool and still hidden from the sun.

The mood of the river alternated between turbulence and tranquillity as we progressed down it. Another set of rapids ahead would induce adrenalin and an automatic response: zip up the wet suit, pull the hat down tight, squint the eyes and brace the body for action. A heaving mass of foam would briefly jostle us, then spit us out at the other end, drenched and often in hot pursuit of a runaway hat. As the thunderous roar of the rapids gave way once more to the quiet lapping of water against the edge of the Li-Lo, we would drift slowly past huge boulders embedded in the middle of the river, sad and silent. Occasionally a lizard would be spotted on a rock on the bank. Undisturbed by our presence, it

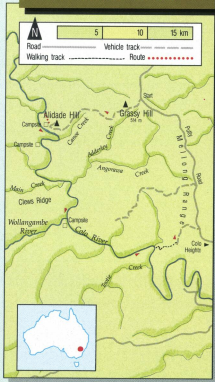
them to Bill.) Perhaps the old 'armchair' method won the day—sitting up with the pack on and leaning back to take in the scenery.

The Colo makes an impressive U-turn at its junction with Canoe Creek. It was here that our quietly floating convoy surprised another party on the spacious, sandy bank. A brief conversation revealed that they were staying there for a leisurely weekend.

After leaving them we didn't spot another soul for the next two and a half days. Such is the isolation of this area.

A couple of kilometres, and more than a couple of arm strokes, brought us to a broad left-hand bend where the river flows almost east again. At 7 pm nobody wanted to stay wet. The massive sandbank on the inside of this bend proved to be an ideal spot to spend the night.

## Colo River area





would continue soaking up the sun while keeping one eye on the unexpected visitors.

After a hot, fly-ridden lunch break, we were keen to return to the cool water. The five of us then travelled through what is probably the most impressive section of the Colo. This stretch, between the Angorawa Creek and Wollangambe River junctions, is flanked by kilometre upon kilometre of high, uninterrupted cliffs. The deep impression made by this area was no doubt accentuated by the low afternoon sun as it illuminated these vertical sandstone walls. Those facing the west were warm and golden while their counterparts across the river stood cool and dark in shadow. How insignificant one feels when sized up against such towering majesty.

After spending ten hours of the day in the water, with skin resembling that of a prune, we reached the Wollangambe junction at about 7 pm. Thinking the Colo's water sufficiently cool, we were unprepared for the extreme coldness of the water from the Wollangambe. Our camp on a small sand-bar at the junction of these two great rivers was a picture. However, sleeping just half a metre above the water-level was a daunting prospect in view of the deposits made by previous floods. There they were, 10 to 15 metres up in the nearby trees. No rain had fallen during the last 30 hours so the risk seemed minimal.

A raging log fire was soon crackling away to the accompaniment of a lone harmonica. The warmth was welcome even though it was the middle of summer. We had lost an enormous amount of body heat by conduction to the river during the day. In fact, I didn't manage to get too hot in the down sleeping-bag that had been adequate for sleeping in a snow-cave the previous winter. A damp Li-Lo, with a groundsheet thrown over the top, functions well as a mattress so all was set for another, much-needed, revitalizing sleep.

Waking up during that night was certainly a moving experience. It was reward enough to inhale the cool air, listen to the water gurgling and glance at the coals still glowing a deep red. This was capped off by the sight of an almost full moon peeping through the eucalypts on the ridge, eventually to illuminate the entire gorge. Who would want to miss such a magnificent spectacle?

Lying awake and absorbing this tranquillity, it was difficult to imagine just what would be here if any of the proposed uses of the gorge were ever implemented. In the 1870s a Colo valley railway was proposed as an alternative to the existing western line from Sydney. It was even surveyed for such a purpose. In 1899 a 100 metre high dam was proposed to flood 38 kilometres of the Colo's length. The intention was to supply hydro-

electric power to sawmills. Then, as recently as 1977, the possibility of a dam was investigated once more, this time with the intention of supplying cooling water to a power-station. But still the Colo flows.

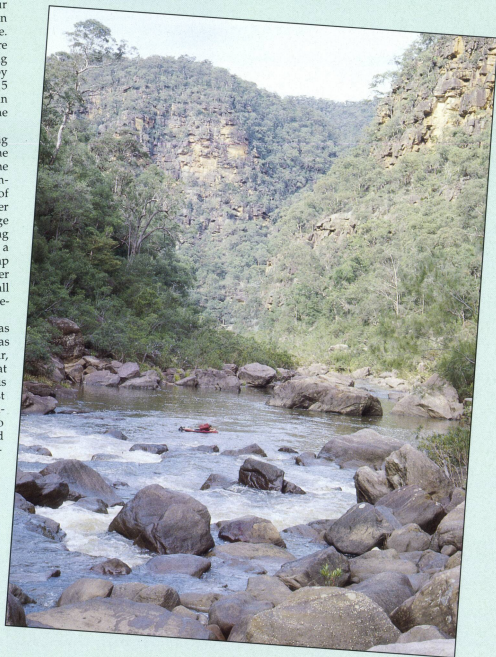
An early start on Monday found us spending a lot of time in lazy, deep water. So we had enough paddling to do without the head wind that stirred up during the morning. Another lizard on a rock, catching the odd fly, was perhaps amused by our struggles to clock up an average speed of one kilometre an hour through this section. It was here that Bill scored the last laugh with his highly efficient 'flipper' technique, motoring up ahead of us all. The shape of the gorge had changed by this stage. Those dominant cliffs that were so noteworthy upstream from the Wollangambe junction had given way to a long, relatively straight, V-shaped valley. It was less impressive yet peaceful and soothing.

The surprising highlight of the day, among all this flat water,

was what is probably a grade-six rapid (that is, definitely unsuitable for Li-Los) about five kilometres downstream from where we had camped. The rapid appeared like a powerful cascading waterfall, dropping several metres and stretching across the full width of the river. Needless to say, we found an alternative route round that one.

By 3 pm the foot of Bob Turners Track was reached. A one-and-a-half-hour climb (we had forgotten what it was like to sweat) and we were back at Bill's car. We picked up the other car next and headed for the café at Colo Heights. Savoured moments were relived over an eggburger and chips. After 20 hours of paddling, over three days, the Colo had made an impression. We can highly recommend the 'comfortable alternative'. ■

*Brian Truran is a 28-year-old scientific-instrument maker at present employed as a computer operator. At the age of 14 he started bushwalking with a few school friends and since then has been organizing walks, canyoning trips and ski tours with friends. He lives in Sydney and has walked extensively in New South Wales and in South-west Tasmania.*





A person in a yellow kayak is positioned on the right side of a massive, undulating sand dune. The dune's surface is covered in fine, wavy ripples, suggesting a breeze. The person is wearing a blue shirt and is holding a paddle. A long, dark shadow of the person and the kayak is cast onto the sand to their left. The sky above is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is surreal, as the person appears to be on a dry, sandy landscape rather than water.

# **S***illy* WATER

*Andrew Barnes  
reflects on a youth  
misspent on  
white water*

## WILD CANOEING

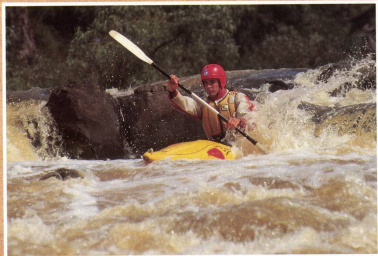
**Y**ou can't insure yourself against drowning while kayaking. A good thing, too. Life is getting far too insurable for my liking.

Nor can you hold a mobile phone while paddling. You could carry one in a dry bag but no one I know does and I hope they never will. On the river, away from instant medical help, I want to make sure that my decisions are influenced by the modern world as little as possible.

I've seen people become suddenly worried when they first sit in a kayak. I've seen them terrified when they capsize one. And with good reason: you can't breathe under water. Later, I've seen exhilaration spread across those same faces after making their first smooth, controlled moves in a stretch of white water.

I have more clear, untangled memories of white-water kayaking than of any other of life's adventures. Why? Pure, unfettered adrenalin. Seething, chaotic rapids provide a crystalline consciousness hard to find elsewhere. In contrast to most sports the medium with which a paddler grapples is in motion. On entering the maw of a rapid, doubt must be very far from your mind. A river shows no restraint or respite. It doesn't slow down for mistakes or stop for decisions. It demands reaction as well as timing, planning, subtlety, skill and explosive action.

My snapshot memories reach back to 1981, the year of my first visit to the Mitta Mitta River with Steve Mackenzie. Our previous kayaking experience included just a few trips on the Yarra River. Our plan therefore was to explore the



Peter Cooke negotiating the Mill rapid, Loddon River, Victoria. Andrew Barnes. **Main photo**, not your average grade-four rapid! Dune paddling at Tamboon Inlet, Croajingolong National Park, Victoria. Shelley Overson



easiest sections of the river. Fortunately, we fell in with a few Patterson Lakes Canoe Club die-hards. We subsequently found ourselves on a remarkable adventure down the wildest section of the river.

The first major rapid is called Graveyard. Capsizing at the top seemed to trigger a surreal, slow-motion film sequence in which I was the main actor. All around, events rushed past while my own actions decelerated; to the point where nothing I did had any effect. Ever so slowly my hand reached for a throw rope. Missing it, my body washed ashore instead. Someone threw my paddle across the river. Missing the catch, I watched it whistle through the air like a blue-tipped spear. Re-embarking, I managed two paddle strokes before being dunked and slammed about the head in the kayak-width funnel that denotes the end of the Graveyard.

Real time returned and the rest of the day felt like a continuous scream of adrenalin as I ploughed through wild waves, dodged massive boulders and confronted huge drops: falling out a further six times in all.

By the end of 1982 my paddling experience had grown to a grand total of 18 months. I was cocky, and more than anything else I wanted to kayak the Franklin River.

Fortuitously, through the Youth Hostels Canoe Club, I met a fellow by the name of Peter Stephen. Because he was bald, I instantly assumed that Peter was 20 years older than I and therefore a man from whom I could learn a lot about white water. I didn't tell him so, however, because he was part of a group planning to paddle the Franklin and might have figured that I didn't have the necessary experience. Peter certainly proved to have skills superior to mine, but wasn't the advanced age I had assumed.

Chris and Yvonne McLaughlin were leading the trip. 'Can you roll?' they asked. 'Of course', I replied, not mentioning that any Eskimo rolls to date had been during games of canoe polo in a swimming-pool.

Off we went. Upon leaving the Collingwood River and entering the Franklin, over I went on the first rapid. That slow-motion film reel started again as my head went bump, bump, bump along the riverbed. 'Better roll here', I thought, 'or the game's up'. Somehow, the boat righted itself. I shook the water from my face to see five pairs of intense eyes flick into 'we were never concerned' mode.

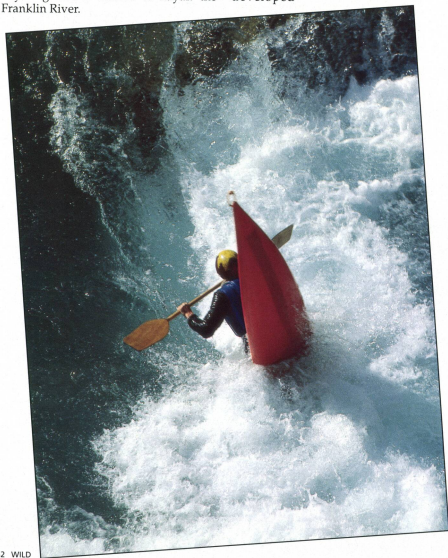
During the mid-1980s, over an intense four-year period of kayaking, my skills developed

to a point where that slow-motion film reel occasionally reversed itself. At its height it was akin to those old Superman films where Superman is moving so fast that everything around him is slow by comparison. On these occasions rapids seemed to decelerate around me. Sometimes, it was as if the water barely moved, allowing me to dance my kayak through the maelstrom; paddles whirling in a blur, boat zipping from eddy to eddy while the water took a rest, giving me a trouble-free descent.

Once or twice these skills featured at just the right moment, saving me from dangerous situations. During one instruction weekend in 1984 the Mitchell River was particularly high. Standing waves stretched from bank to bank, providing super-fast crosses from side to side. A kayaker was sitting in an eddy on the opposite bank, not moving. Exiting my eddy at speed my boat picked up the wave and began surfing across; the ride literally the same as riding a breaking swell at the beach. Suddenly time decelerated. I reached up, left hand releasing the paddle and in the same motion reverse-grabbing the sharp nose of the kayak about to pierce my head. The other paddler had crossed at the same instant, the bow of her kayak travelling at head height. We met in the middle, our combined speeds enough to cause serious injury. Pushing her bow away I went over, paddle still grasped firmly in one hand, and rolled up—all the time operating within that slow-motion bubble of ultimate control.

Later that year a group of us travelled north to the flooded Nymboida River. The first couple of days were full of rapids carrying more water and requiring more technical skill than anything I had previously experienced. We then arrived at the Lift Over. For 30 minutes we inspected the rapid, shaking in our boots. It was a solid grade above anything we had paddled before—rivers that included all the 'test-pieces' down south like the Indi and Swampy Plains.

I clearly remember shooting the top drop. Cleanly, I completed the 'no mistakes' reverse ferry-glide above a seething mass of white water. Then came a problem. Paddling forward to regain boat speed, my Prijon Everest came to a shuddering halt in a stopper none of us had considered serious. Quietly, it sucked me backward and gripped the boat. The kayak bucketed and kicked wildly underneath me. Time stretched out as I held grimly to my support stroke. I watched my mate Peter Stephen run wildly yet ever so slowly toward me along the bank. I was caught between high water and hell. The stopper wanted to spit me out into the seething mass behind. Below the broadsided kayak was



Terry Pairman 'looping' in Cromwell Gap, Clutha River, New Zealand. **Barnes.** Right, David Borojavic stopper-jumping the lower fall of the Slot rapid, Lea River, Tasmania. **Matthew Newton**





the narrow funnel I wanted to pierce. And yet, I was absolutely clear in thinking about what needed to be done. A moment later, through force of paddle, will and fear, I levered out into a mid-rapid eddy. A moment later I broke into the current, threaded the final chute and shot its ejecting drop; touching a rock at the bottom which sent me over but couldn't stifle a 'Who!' of adrenalin on rolling up.

In 1985 the search for the white water and the clarity of experience led me to New Zealand. I felt I knew a bit about boating in a fragile craft. The first rapid I paddled carried a greater volume of water than anything encountered in Australia. Some months later I found myself furiously bracing while travelling backward through a massive breaking stopper on the flooded Clutha River. By then I was truly beginning to understand what big water really was.

Those seven months in New Zealand provided one of the most unfettered, joyous periods of my life. Friends there had the ability to live with intense, uncluttered purpose. More than anything they taught me that a kayaker mustn't get stuck in the silly water. Where eddy lines meet the main river flow are zones of confusion; ill-defined boundaries swirling with liquid that has no sense of purpose. A canoeist must paddle emphatically through these zones or risk being caught: bobbing precariously while the silly water flows this way and that, grabbing, needling and jostling the boat. The New Zealanders I knew never, ever, stuffed about in the silly water.

On leaving New Zealand in 1985 kayaking was essentially left behind. So, picking up my paddle again in late 1992, when my backside hadn't been in a boat for years, I knew there was going to be

trouble. The surf at Jan Juc was frothing and spitting around me, malevolently flowing and receding far more rapidly than I remembered. Paddling out, I failed to claw over a breaking set that took me by surprise with its speed, sending me over in a back loop. As the wave pummelled my head and cracked my knuckles against the kayak, I thought, 'Oh my God, I hope I can still roll'. Luckily, Eskimo rolling is a little like riding a bike.

Beyond the break I sat and nursed my bruised knuckles, not to mention my equally bruised ego. Eventually I quietly slipped into shore, resolving that the Yarra was a better place to work on resurrecting rusty skills.

In January 1993 I wandered down to Dights Falls. Bumbling about, I could still feel the same sense of expectation that first coursed through me in 1982.

In February four of us clambered into a battered Lite Ace and headed for the Thomson River. Moving off, I practised a few bow draws. 'Guess it takes more than a couple of Yarra sessions to regain form', commented Dave.

The river was high and we floated along a fast-moving brown stream, my first trip down river in four years. I had forgotten the tranquillity to be found floating on a river through the bush. Rapids were still bouncing along much more quickly than I remembered; however, that Thomson trip rekindled my flame for paddling.

March rolled around and the Youth Hostels Canoe Club headed for the Blue Duck Cabins on the Mitta Mitta. The river was very low but the flame for paddling was burning bright. Most of the club stalwarts weren't keen but a few of us got together to paddle the Gorge.

We floated off on the bare minimum of water. Squeezing through the Graveyard, Jeanette fell out. I wondered whether her own surreal slow-motion film was running through her mind.

At such a low water-level the day was one of constant reaction, anticipation, reflex and timing. Arriving at Dislocation, the normal route was impassable. The rapid now demanded a sharp turn to the right, a narrow squeeze and a deftly placed right-hand paddle stroke. That stroke was the key as it meant avoiding a nasty, bone-jarring chute, instead steering the boat into a more appealing, clean funnel of water which exited right down a rushing ramp as the river recaptured flow from the left.

Launching at the top I made the first turn and slipped through the squeeze. My right paddle stroke fell in at just the right place. For a moment, I had all the time in the world as the kayak slipped quietly down the funnel toward the final ramp. Briefly, I had glimpsed a couple of frames of that old Superman feature. ■

*Andrew Barnes (see Contributors in Wild no 13) is a free-lance photographer and a Nordic skiing instructor and addict. When not on the snow, he paddles white water.*

# M R NATURAL

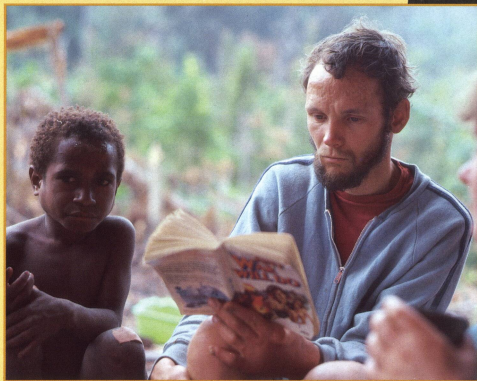
The low-down on Australia's leading caver,  
Alan Warild, by *Stephen Bunton*

Caving must be the least glamorous of the rucksack sports but it does have its aficionados. There can be no crowds, no spectators; anyone who wants to see what it is like must go and see for himself or herself. Photographs are hardly going to entice many people underground and rarely do photos convey the miserable cold, the wet or the true horror of cave mud. Despite this, caving presents the right sort of attraction for Alan Warild. The physical and technological challenges are obvious but for Al the attraction is precisely the fact that you face these challenges privately, away from the gaze of onlookers. The other enduring challenge of caving for Al is exploration.

During a career spanning more than 25 years, Al has explored caves in Australia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, France, Algeria and his beloved Mexico. He has bottomed many of the world's deepest caves both with friends and alone. He has many first solo descents to his credit. Throughout this time he has been a leader in the field of technical caving, cave surveying—and an inspiration to his peers, many of whom have followed him on expeditions to Mexico in search of a kilometre-deep cave. He has written the textbook *Vertical* on caving and then rewritten it, always drawing on his vast experience. Yet he remains a quiet, modest and unassuming individual.

Al began his caving career with a group of young Sydney cavers whose ranks included none other than Chris Peisker and Greg Child. As these characters moved off to Mt Arapiles and distinguished climbing careers, Al went to teachers' college and began more serious caving with the University of New South Wales Speleological Society. This group was then doing some exciting exploration at Cliefdon and Yarrangobilly. It was at Yarrangobilly that Al met Julia James.

At the time Julia was a world renowned caver and an extraordinary organizer of expeditions. Her mission in life was the search for the world's deepest cave. This was thought to be in Papua New Guinea, and Julia had run several expeditions to the remote Southern Highlands Province. The first of these



Al Warild relaxing in Papua New Guinea. Dirk Stoffels. **Right,** Warild absailing in Big Tree Pot, Tasmania. Stephen Bunton

expeditions, in 1973, had been in conjunction with New Zealand cavers. At Christmas 1976 Al joined Julia in New Zealand with a number of budding Australian hard men who were searching for the deepest cave in the Southern hemisphere.

They mounted two mini-expeditions, one to Mt Owen and the other to Mt Arthur. This quest had been Julia's pet project for over half a decade. Previous expeditions to these areas had used ladders almost exclusively. This trip was to rely solely on single-rope techniques which were still in their developmental infancy and the venture was regarded by some sceptics as a very dangerous or at least a foolhardy undertaking. The trip was without mishap and almost cracked the record. More importantly, on this trip Al forged his trade mark of technical ropework and rigging.

The following Christmas Al had his first trip to Mexico together with an American expedition exploring La Grieta. Al, Julia and Neil Hickson were

## WILD CAVING





virtually relegated to reserve status on the expedition. They were not included on the first 'push' trips down La Grieta. They could, if they liked, look at some unexplored holes on the hillside above.

In a hectic week Al and Neil had set a world record. They stopped exploration at a depth of 778 metres in Sotano de Agua de Carrizo when they ran out of rope. They had investigated the deepest

and drivers, hangers and harnesses have all succumbed to the Warild flair for redesign and improvement, as has a basic prusik rig. Al's combination Frog and Rope-Walk system enabled him to prusik out of Golondrinas in close to record time.

Sotano de las Golondrinas is a 335 metre deep shaft open to the surface. The rope hangs free from the lip for the entire

Probably the best activity for maintaining fitness during the hot months is canyoning, in which a variety of work skills are often put to the test. Exploration, canyoning and desert bushwalks others often rely on exceptional navigational skills. A master with a map and compass almost anything to do with sports—yet admits that he is not into activities in which he is not in control. Over recent years he has shown a passion for windsurfing and has achieved a degree of competence in this other! outdoor sport.

But more than anything, he is a vertical world of caves. On Australia's doorstep is Papua New Guinea, an unexplored, partly uninhabited, rugged mountains full of limestone with a high rainfall, it has the potential for the world's deepest cave. Al is prominently as a member of the Atea 78 and Muller 82 expedition, which did more than a lion's share of the organization.

In 1978 the objective was to explore Atea Kananda, a vast river cave. It was the most ambitious cave exploration attempted because of the enormous quantities of water which were encountered. There was also a considerable risk that many of the



Warild pausing for a photo with locals in Zongolica, Mexico. Stefan Eberhard. Right, Julia James and Al Warild Li-Loing on the Shoalhaven River during a canyoning trip. Bunton

cave ever explored on a single expedition. The Americans were stunned and just had to see it to believe it. As they descended they were continually fouled by the technical rigging and rope-protectors, both designed to minimize the abrasion of the thin single rope. The protagonists of America's consumer society preferred simply to use a rope until it wore out and then throw it away. In Australia we could neither afford such extravagance nor justify the risk of using worn ropes.

Al's trip to Mexico testified to the fact that he, more than anyone, was developing a uniquely Australian style of vertical caving, a combination of the American need for an abrasion-resistant rope with the French/European idea of numerous rebelayes to allow the rope to hang free. Al did not speak French but gained his ideas by religiously translating articles from magazines and carefully studying the diagrams.

Something of a gear freak, but more a technical innovator, he is consistently making or modifying gear, on either a sewing machine or a metalwork lathe. Tents, sleeping-bags, pile clothing, rucksacks, rope-packs, protectors, bolt-kits

length of the pitch. It took Al 33 minutes to prusik out, which was faster than abseiling in. Due to the enormous rope weight and the heat generated by friction, it took 40 minutes or more to abseil. While in Mexico he made ascents of the highest and third-highest mountains in Central America, the volcanic cones of Orizaba and Ixtaccihuatl, demonstrating a competence with ice-axe and crampons. In his first season climbing in New Zealand he climbed Mt Cook and five other 3000 metre peaks. Before the invention of the revolutionary rockclimbing protection devices called Friends, Al was quite a competent climber arranging bombproof protection using nuts and often doing bold leads.

His other great love is cross-country skiing. Again, for him it is a technical game. In the mid-1970s there were few people attempting Telemark skiing; most people were 'bushwalking on skis'. For Al it was about carving turns, and Telemarks opened up the possibility of skiing a greater range of slopes and snow conditions.

His remarkable fitness ensured that on any day he got more downhill runs than anybody else and he just kept on improving. Occasionally he is seen skiing cross-country downhill but he prefers the less crowded slopes of the Main Range, New South Wales.

**I**n a hectic week Al and Neil had set a world record... They had investigated the deepest cave ever explored on a single expedition.

would suddenly flood without warning. To avoid the danger posed by the flowing through the cave, we had templated high-level rope traverses. These would have to be placed to aid-climbing and bolting techniques. With our skills, such techniques tested out on the unlikely prospect of climbing the Gunbarrel Area. Wyambene Cave, New South Wales, shaft rises over 100 metres into darkness and Al was going to find what was up there. Over several days it was sieged on aid by 'ramming' until at 64 metres the crackling out and Al got bored with the monotony of bolting. We were not using the old star-drill bolting kits but were using the practicality of Ramset Terraformers they worked 'just fine'.

In the deep, wet caves of Papua New Guinea few people had the skill or experience to tackle Mamo Kananda flood-prone passages, those of the derush and beyond. As the 1978 season approached at the end of a drizzly night was followed by when the thunderstorms began a



Even with a fast party we all knew that the cave would flood before Al and company returned even if they obeyed the 2 pm curfew. Were they just trapped in a dry section or had they been flushed by a flood pulse? For two gloomy days the expedition stopped. With the cave flooded no one could venture underground and most people moped around considering the prospect of losing good friends; in particular Al, who was their mentor, patient instructor and fine leader. The party eventually emerged unharmed, but chilled by their ordeal.

This was not the first time Al had spent an unscheduled night trapped in a Papua New Guinea cave. Four years earlier, almost to the day, he, Julia James and Neil Hickson were inundated with floodwater. Caught in a rising stream they roped together to 'body-surf' downstream to safety but, they hoped, not over an impending waterfall. Sanctuary from the water was found at one point where Al scaled the wall and the others prusiked up behind. I asked Neil about the adventure and his comment was: 'Well it isn't every day you get to throw away a \$300 camera to give Warild his pegs and étiéris!'

With flood-water swirling round you and your belayer and a friend treading water, few people would have the composure to start bash and dangle climbing, but Alan Warild is just such a person. Caving is the medium through which he shows his fitness, skills, competence and expresses his individuality.

He is an individual. He almost feels that he doesn't need to cave with anyone else. The ultimate expression of his self-reliance is solo caving. Using the 'cord technique', learned from one of his French translations, he bottomed Khazad-Dum, Tasmania, in seven hours return. He told no one but Julia beforehand and probably would have told no one afterwards except that when the others arrived at Maydena he was in the process of cleaning his caving gear.

When Ice-Tube surpassed Khazad-Dum as Australia's deepest cave he was quick to solo it as well. Being a much more serious undertaking, it took him 16 hours. Such efforts have added a keen edge of competition to the Australian caving scene. He is a sport caver, stating 'I've done my share of carrying thermometers and Fluorescein through caves'.

Al returned to Mexico in 1981 and once again joined the Americans in the exploration of deep caves at Huautla. He spent four months in the area, involved mostly in the exploration of Li Nita. Here he did some of the best caving of his life. Due to Al's amazing ability, he was now included on all the most important trips and he acquitted himself very well. In a land where most trips last over 20 hours, where underground camps last two weeks, where rope-work is measured in kilometres and people fall asleep at the tops of pitches exhausted from prusiking with heavy loads, there was one person who just kept on going with unbelievable resilience. His fitness was toned up by a month's cross-country skiing in the USA.

By this time Al had become quite fluent in Spanish. His goal was to lead an Australian expedition to Mexico and, he hoped, to find a cave deeper than that magical kilometre mark. He and Julia went on a reconnaissance of potential karst areas over Christmas 1983 but it wasn't the major objective of the trip.

Al returned having soloed Li Nita (-1020 metres) in an astonishing 47 hours using cordelette. His equipment was crammed into two packs which weighed a total of 36 kilograms. This weight included a rack of pegs, a selection of nuts and a bolt kit. He carried sufficient bolts to aid out, climbing up a pitch if there should be the unfortunate prospect of a rope becoming fouled. The longest pitch in the cave was only 50 metres and he carried two ropes of this length and a shorter one. The cord technique requires that you pull down your ropes after each pitch and replace them with a fine cord with which the ropes are repositioned for the ascent. Al carried a total of 1200 metres of three millimetre cord. For almost two days his conscience was his only companion. He had to rely solely on his caving ability and his skill to rig the cave to avoid an epic.

His modest comment after the trip was: 'Well I didn't eat or sleep much.' He wasn't the first caver to solo a kilometre-deep cave but over the next few years he carried out a series of remarkable solo descents of the world's deepest caves. At the time he started, there were ten caves deeper than 1000 metres and over the next few years he 'collected' six of them.

This prompted people to refer to him as the Rheinhold Messner of caving, a reference to the famous Italian mountaineer who was the first person to climb all the world's 8 000 metre peaks.

The trouble with ticking off deep caves is that more are constantly being discovered. Al's aim was always to make sure an Australian expedition found at least one of them and, if possible, more. The ideal cave as far as Al was concerned was one with a depth which exceeded its plan length; that is, it has less than a kilometre of walking, squeezing or crawling passage.

Al took over the reins as Australia's premier caving expedition organizer from Julia James with a series of successful Mexico trips. The first of these, in 1985, introduced a number of caves (including the writer) to the challenge and excitement of really deep caving. The expedition bottomed Sotano San Augustin, the deepest point in Sistema Huautla, and bottomed Li Nita. For all

Warild at Lake Cootapatamba, Snowy Mountains, New South Wales, enjoying one of his favourite activities—cross-country skiing. Bunton

but Al, it was the first trip beyond -1000 metres. The most significant achievement was the discovery of Nita Xonga in the caving area of Zongolica. At -405 metres, exploration stopped at the lip of a very deep pitch and plans were made for a return visit the following season.

In the interim the Australians were active in Europe but none as active as Alan Warild. He climbed Mt Blanc, and soloed Sima GESM (-1098 metres) in 37 hours, the Gouffre Berger (-1120 metres) and, with Mark Wilson, he bottomed Pierre St Martin (-1342 metres) on cord technique in 52 hours. He also had his first visit to the world's deepest cave, Réseau Jean-Bernard (-1535 metres), on a French expedition. By this time Al had fully changed to caving in the French style—thin ropes and technical rigging with lots of rebelay. A by-product of the expedition was learning more than a little French to make the translating work easier.

The return to Mexico the following Christmas was fruitful. The pitch in Nita Xonga turned out to be 310 metres but the

cave terminated at -740 metres, well short of the magical -1000 metre mark. So, too, did Sonyance (-740 metres) and Guixani at a disappointing -940 metres. Nevertheless, there would be other Mexico expeditions.

Al generally believes that sponsorship for expeditions isn't worth the hassle, and those wishing to participate in them need to fork out the money to cover all costs. As a result, Al's expeditions are democratic and egalitarian. He's the leader because it's his idea, he's the inspiration and he speaks Spanish. When the Australian Geographic Society donated some money to his Santa Ana expedition, Al just put it into the kitty. Not many outdoor celebrities do that sort of thing when they are trying to eke out an existence!

Publishing is hardly the way to make money. Nevertheless, Al was determined to write the book on technical rope-work. Published in 1988, *Vertical* became the sporting cavers' textbook. It is well illustrated and contains explanatory photos which reflect Al's desire for excellence. Al is a great photographer of cave action but rarely steps in front of the lens (and no one else's photos quite match up it seems). Better than the information in the book, however, are the unmistakable dry Warild humour and value judgements which filter through his text. The book, now in its second edition, is drawn from vast experience and injects adventure into a technical text.

I enjoyed the section on disasters. Like all adventurous activities, caving has its risks; minimizing them and coping with them are part of the excitement. Of this aspect Al's had his fair share. When he soloed Sima GESM one of his ropes got stuck and he had to solo aid-climb an 80 metre pitch, placing his own bolts by hand, to get out. Certainly Al possesses the necessary courage and determination but also a lot of patience. When he soloed Sistema Badalona (-1149 metres), a canyoning-style through-trip, he had to wait four hours for a flood to subside so that he could roof-sniff out.

Al has now also soloed Réseau Jean-Bernard, the world's deepest cave. This was a world first. There are now 44 caves deeper than 1000 metres and Al has soloed more of them than anyone else. All but one were world firsts. This is an outstanding achievement by a remarkable man. Al Warild is a person who hides his light under a bushel—well down a cave, anyway! He quietly and confidently goes about doing his thing and that's going caving. At the time of writing he's back in Mexico on yet another trip in search of more deep caves. That's his passion. ■



Stephen Bunton (see Contributors in *Wild* no 6) is *Wild's* Contributing Editor for caving. An experienced walker and climber, he has visited many parts of Australia and several overseas countries to pursue these interests.



# WINTER TRAGEDY ON MT KOSCIUSKO

*Klaus Hueneker chronicles the deaths of Seaman and Hayes*

A few years ago Klaus Hueneker set out to rediscover the site where the body of Evan Hayes had been found in 1929. Klaus was accompanied by Henry Willis, whose father, Jack, had been a member of the search party for Seaman and Hayes.

Laurie Seaman and Evan Hayes were the first skiers to die on the Main Range in the high country of New South Wales. They perished near the summit of Mt Kosciusko 66 years ago. Both had set off from Betts Camp near Spencers Creek, the closest accommodation at the time, to ski to the summit and back. They were last seen alive above Charlottes Pass on 14 August 1928.

Hayes had made many trips to the summit from 1923 and was an active cross-country skier with the Millions Club. Seaman was a fine athlete, with service as a pilot in the First World War, but had only one year's experience on skis.

The search for the missing men was persistent and extensive and aeroplanes and horses were used. Capable skiers such as George Aalberg and Ray Utne



These rocks indicate the spot where the body of Evan Hayes was discovered on 31 December 1929. Klaus Hueneker, left, the remains of Evan Hayes at the time of the grisly discovery. Willis collection

covered large parts of the Main Range and the Crackenback Range. Aalberg reported ski tracks leading away from the summit towards Merritts Look-out (above today's Thredbo). Some searchers passed within 50 metres of where Seaman's body was eventually found.

An ominous find was a scarf and a glove belonging to Hayes.

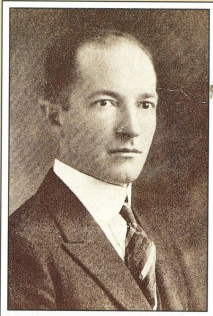
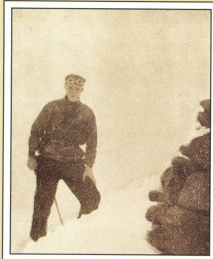
The riding party covered the Thredbo valley, Dead Horse Gap and the western slopes down to Tom Groggin. At times the horses were up to their bellies in snow and black mud. The party visited all the huts in the area but apart from the remains of a fire had little to report.

Experienced skiers from Kiandra also joined the search. Bill Hughes (who had been the navigator on the first ski crossing from Kiandra to Mt Kosciuszko the year before) and his brother Bob spent three days skiing between the Elaine Mine north of Mt Tabletop and Tin Hut near Gungahart. They found some old tracks but no sign of Seaman and Hayes.

Their return on what was the first double crossing of the Jagungal wilderness in winter was quite an epic. Bill Hughes summed it up in the *Ski Year Book* of 1929. 'Fully forty miles, skiing only ten, walking and carrying full equipment for the rest, in twelve hours, is a performance we do not wish to again attempt. Our chance of being successful seemed to be very remote, but the satisfaction of knowing we had tried was sufficient recompense for our trouble.'

Seaman's body was eventually found at the foot of the Etheridge Range on 9 September 1928, near where the memorial hut now stands. A schoolboy playing on a snow-drift happened upon the ravaged body—apparently in a sitting, waiting position—with its staring eyes. Seaman's skis were a few metres away. The body of Hayes was not found until two summers later, on the last day of 1929.

Jack Willis and Charlie Byrne were out on horseback looking after stock on the Cogan and Rose grazing lease near Mt Etheridge. They had set up a camp above Merritts Creek which, following the demise of Wragges Observatory on the top of Mt Kosciuszko, was the highest camp in Australia. It was a corrugated iron lean-to wedged among some huge granite boulders.

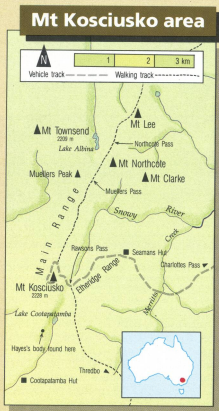


Laurie Seaman. **Above top**, Seaman on the summit of Mt Kosciuszko, August 1928 and, **above right**, Evan Hayes on the summit. **Bottom right**, Hayes with some of his sporting trophies. *All four photos 1929 Ski Year Book.* **Far right**, Seaman's Hut stands near where the body of Laurie Seaman was found at the foot of the Etheridge Range. *Hueneke collection*

Jack died some years ago and no one else quite knew where the site was. He had last been there on horseback in 1958 with his son Henry. Near Lake Cootapatamba Jack had waved his arm across towards Mt Kosciuszko and said: 'Oh, it's over there.' 'Over there' was a very large area. Dick Power, another stockman, said it was about 20 yards from the lake. These scraps of oral history and two poorly focused photographs were all we had to go by when we tried to relocate the site some time ago.

One sepia photo shows people standing around the site with a waist-high cairn to the left; a large, distinctive rock to the right and a distant skyline bedecked with three big rocks. There was no major peak and no lake from which to get bearings. It could have been taken anywhere within an area of fifty square kilometres.

We stood on the eastern shore of Lake Cootapatamba and compared skylines. Nothing fitted. We dispersed, some east, some west and some south towards



Every day Jack would say: 'I wonder if we'll find him today?' The day they did 'find him' was the only one on which Jack hadn't asked the question. Jack 'cast his dog' (sent it out to reconnoitre); Nigger came across a skull, a bag of bones, some weathered boots and a pair of skis. The remains lay on one of the skis at the foot of a steep slope of Mt Kosciuszko south of Lake Cootapatamba.



Dr Who's Tardis—a bright-red structure known as Cootapatamba Hut. Nothing fitted. A seemingly futile hour passed.

It was time to let intuition take over. I felt pulled towards a steep slope where the lower moraine of Lake Cootapatamba meets the bulk of Mt Kosciuszko. The skyline began to fit; so did the rocks on it. My heart beat much faster than was appropriate for the gentle climb. Another 20 metres and the large rock with the distinct crack appeared. Finally, I spied the flattened cairn. It was time to shout 'I found it'. Henry came, saw and beamed. Historical continuity had been maintained; the pilgrimage in honour of his father had been successful.

But how did Hayes get there, so far from the safe corridor of the pole-marked summit road? Strong clues came from film found in Seaman's camera. Two haunting images (partly due to the film's deterioration in harsh conditions) showed that both men had reached the summit but by different modes. Only one pair of skis was visible.

It is likely that Seaman, the less capable skier, had left his skis below the last steep slope at Rawsons Pass. On the descent Seaman could walk while Hayes had to traverse. In blizzard conditions he traversed too far and came up against the formidable cornice that hangs off Mt Kosciuszko.

John Laidley wrote up details of the search for the missing men in the *Ski Year Book* of 1929 and 1930. On the basis of tracks found in the area he surmised that Hayes had been blown south by the blizzard until he found himself looking into the valley of today's Thredbo. There, according to Laidley, he realized his

mistake, back-tracked and got as far as Lake Cootapatamba. Seaman meanwhile had walked off the steep part of the mountain, got on his skis and some way down the road waited for his friend.

I can readily agree with Laidley's interpretation of what happened to Seaman but I find his thoughts about Hayes open to conjecture. Ski tracks are known to last for some time without a fall of new snow and could have been made by someone else. If Hayes had got as far as the top of Thredbo, it seems more appropriate that he would have contin-

ued down the valley rather than back above the tree-line into a howling gale.

Another skier, Stephen Crean, suffered the same fate in 1985. The incident was widely reported. He lost his bearings in bad weather between Charlottes Pass and Mt Stilwell. Leaving the wind-swept high tops he clambered down 700 metres through dense, snow-covered undergrowth and crossed the Crackenback River before succumbing and dying within earshot of the Alpine Way.

I tend to think that Hayes got no further than where he was found. He may have



## Multiple deaths on Mt Bogong, 1943

### Glenn van der Knijff

In the early afternoon of 5 August 1943 three bodies were discovered not far below the summit of Mt Bogong (1986 metres), Victoria. Georgine Gadsden, John McKee and Ed Welch were members of a party of eight which was camped at Bivouac Hut on the Staircase Spur. On 2 August the three began their ascent from Bivouac Hut in an attempt to ski over the top to Cleve Cole Hut, four kilometres beyond the summit. This was the last time they were seen alive.

On 3 August the other five members tried to reach Cleve Cole Hut but were forced back by severe weather. The foul weather meant that they had an enforced stay at Bivouac Hut the following day, but on 5 August conditions had improved somewhat so they again headed for Cleve Cole Hut. At the Gap, near the small peaks of Castor and Pollux, they came across the ice-covered skis belonging to their three friends. They believed that something was amiss and the group leader, Ian Lenne, climbed Staircase Spur to within a stone's throw of the Summit Hut, where he found the frozen bodies lying in the snow.

Late on 6 August the party descended to the mountain village of Tawonga with the news of the deaths. A rescue party climbed to the place where the skiers had died, to find the two bodies of the men only. Could Georgine actually have

been alive when the three bodies were initially found? Believing that this was a possibility, a check was made of Cleve Cole Hut, but to no avail. The bodies of the two men were taken to Tawonga.

On 10 August a search was made for the body of Georgine by Lenne and four others, including Mick Hull who was in the party with Cleve Cole when he perished on Mt Bogong in 1936. They began to dig into the snow where the other bodies had been discovered, but found nothing. The rescuers surmised that Georgine's body must have slid from its resting place as the snow hardened after the snowfall, into either Doorway Creek to the west or Mountain Creek to the east. Eventually, marks in the snow to the west of the spur led them to the body of Georgine, well down in the gully.

On reflection, it appears likely that all three were overcome by the cold, wind and driving snow. Flasks containing alcohol were found beside the two men. In an effort to warm themselves, the men probably drank from their flasks (Georgine was a non-drinker). A sleeping-bag was protruding from Ed Welch's rucksack and perhaps they were endeavouring to climb into their sleeping-bags when hypothermia set in. According to the coroner's finding, the three died by 'misadventure' but the exact cause of death will never be known. ■

fallen over the cornice or crashed down the steep slope at its southern end and broken a leg or sprained an ankle. The pain may have immobilized him and left him no other choice but to use his remaining strength to dig a shallow snow-cave. He would then have crawled in and lain on his skis to rest. Rest, in the form of hypothermia; and, a little later, death would have followed. Snow may have fallen that night to complete the entombment.

Seaman meanwhile chose to wait for his friend in the cold rather than ski back to the shelter of Betts Camp. In waiting, he also froze to death. He paid the ultimate price of unwavering loyalty and gained immeasurably in stature as a result. Should he have left his friend and saved his own life? If he had, the 'bombproof' memorial hut that graces the summit road may not have been there to save others from the same fate. It was built with the help of a generous donation from his parents. I, for one, am most grateful. ■

Klaus Hueneke (see Contributors in Wild no 5) has been exploring Australia's high places for the last 30 years. He is the author of *Huts of the High Country*. *Kandra to Kosciusko* and *Kosciuszko—Where the Ice-trees Burn*.

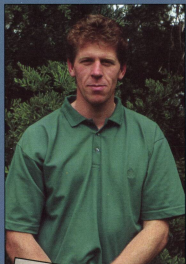


# A

## LPINE WONDERS

The Victorian Alps through the seasons,  
by *Mike Bowman*





**Main photo**, the Crinoline from Long Hill. **Below**, trunk detail on snow gum, Snowy Plains area. All photos were taken in the Victorian Alps.

*Mike Bowman* is a keen solo bushwalker with a passion for capturing on film the natural beauty he encounters. He has walked extensively in Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales. A qualified chef, he currently works at a leading Melbourne hotel.





Waterfall in the rarely visited head-waters of the Catherine River.

**Below,** winter storms have caused a build-up of snow and rime on this snow gum on Mt Speculation.





# WILDERNESS COAST

An extended walk from Mallacoota, Victoria, to Wonboyn, New South Wales; with *Chris Sewell*

**T**he coast between Mallacoota and Wonboyn is perhaps the least visited of any in south-eastern Australia. The area includes Croajingolong National Park in Victoria and Nadgee Nature Reserve in New South Wales. Due to their almost pristine nature, both reserves are currently being assessed for their wilderness potential.

The Nadgee Nature Reserve was first proclaimed in 1957 on the basis of having the least disturbed coastline and hinterland and the last two remaining unpolluted estuaries in New South Wales.

The coastline offers extensive sand beaches and huge, unstable dune systems hiding pristine freshwater lakes, 30 metre high cliffs, sea caves and substantial rock-platforms. Unfortunately, most of the reserve's old-growth forests were burnt in the 1982 fires.

#### When to visit

The coastal climate normally has milder summer and winter temperatures than, for example, Melbourne. Every season offers the walker something different. Summer is seen by many as the favoured season, but the cooler months often have more settled weather, fewer visitors, and there is a greater chance of seeing whales. It must be remembered that at any time fierce storms can lash the area, making progress almost impossible.

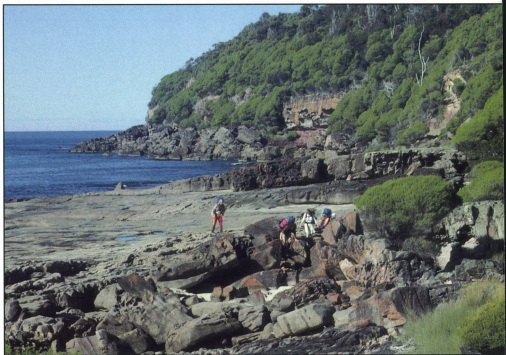
#### Possible hazards

Like any remote or wild place, the area between Mallacoota and Wonboyn has many potential hazards. Note that emergency assistance could take at least a day to arrive if a serious incident occurs.

Crossing the numerous river mouths requires caution, especially in times of flood, big ocean swells, and recently breached entrances. Sometimes it might mean waiting for low tide before swimming your pack across, or choosing the safer alternative of retracing your steps and taking the management tracks. If at Lake Wau Wauka overflow or Nadgee Lake in hazardous conditions, the alternative is to take to the scrub and force your way round—a somewhat slow and painful method.

Always watch for the 'rogue' wave when rock-hopping or fossicking in the rock-pools. Assess where the rips are when swimming the beaches. Other potential marine hazards include sharks, blue-ringed octopus, and bluebottle jellyfish.

Little shelter can be found on the walk between Mallacoota and Cape Howe, often exposing the participants to incessant sand-blasting winds and extremes of temperature. At least one party was crippled with hypothermia when a vicious cold front swept along the coast. Drought can dry up the normal sources of water, creating enormous problems for the unprepared walker.



These walkers are seen negotiating the rocky platforms at Greenglade, just a few kilometres from the end of the described walk. Both photos *Chris Sewell*

Apart from the usual snakes, another small hazard is the paralysis tick. All ticks should be removed as soon as discovered, using a good pair of tweezers.

#### Maps

The best maps available are Natmap 1:100 000 *Mallacoota* (for the section between Mallacoota and the border) and the 1:25 000 Central Mapping Authority (NSW) maps *Nadgee* 8823-II-S and *Narrabarba* 8823-II-N. The above CMA maps unfortunately don't show any foot tracks. The *Nadgee* map also doesn't show the track into Nadgee Lake (approximate track junction at grid reference 622500) or to the southern end of Nadgee Beach (approximate track junction at grid reference 621514).

#### Access

Mallacoota is located about 25 kilometres from Genoa off the Princes Highway. The small town boasts a number of camping grounds and holiday units, two supermarkets and a couple of specialty shops where a variety of supplies can be purchased.

Wonboyn is a small village. It has a general store, with camping ground and cottages. It's about ten kilometres off the highway, midway between Genoa and Eden.

Newtons Beach has the only vehicle access between Mallacoota and Wonboyn. It can be reached by first driving to Wonboyn, then following Old Bridge Forest Road (about two kilometres before Wonboyn) signposted 'Nadgee Nature Reserve'. Care is required as the road is rough, narrow and quite steep in places. After rain it becomes impassable to all traffic.

#### The walk

At present permits are not needed when walking through the Croajingolong National Park although this may soon change. However, permits are required for the Nadgee Nature Reserve. The NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service allows only 20 walkers with a maximum party size of eight to be in the reserve at any one time. Camping is only permitted where there is a 'permanent' water-supply. These are at Howe Bay, Nadgee Lake, Nadgee Beach, Harrys Hut (near the ford, on the Nadgee River), Newtons Beach and Merrica River. Check with the ranger about the availability of water; if scarce, water should be carried by each member.

The permit costs \$2.00 a day for each person, paid in advance when your permit is issued. Applications for permits must be in writing and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The address is: NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service, PO Box 186, Eden, NSW 2551. Phone (064) 96 1434, fax (064) 96 3187.

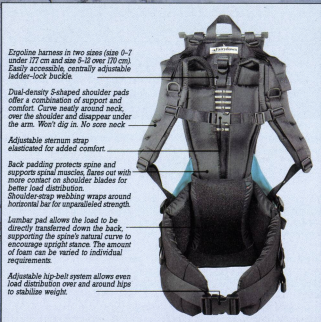
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The 60 kilometre trip can be completed in three hard days, but I prefer to take a more leisurely five or six days to enjoy the richness of the area.

The following notes are written for experienced parties, capable of planning routes and navigating through a variety of environments. Walkers should also be able to cope when faced with any of the above-mentioned hazards.

In places, the scrub is thick and progress can be painfully slow. Long pants and gaiters give added protection when pushing and walking through it. Sun-glasses protect the eyes from the intense glare of the beaches and from wind-blown sand.

**Mallacoota to Lake Barra-cotta.** The first obstacle is crossing the entrance of Lake Mallacoota. Getting a lift with one of the many boaters has rarely presented a problem; or ask Rankin's Boat Hire at Mallacoota. Failing all else, wait for dead low tide, waterproof your pack and swim it across. The best vantage-points from which to survey the entrance and sandbars are the red shelter-shed at the bottom end of the council camping ground and the look-out at Bastion Point. Once on the surf beach, simply walk along the water's edge. Continue to the sand-spit opposite Tullaberge Island.

A kilometre further on from the sand-spit, drop packs and head into the dunes for a look at Lake Barracotta—East Gippsland's largest freshwater lake. This point on the beach is occasionally marked with an upright pole, but storms sometimes wash it out. From the shore dune's top you should see a long, open wind/sand scour that culminates in a desert landscape. Push through the thick coastal scrub (about 50 metres) and walk up the enormous barren sand dune. From its crest, look across to the Howe Range with Lake Barracotta nestling below.

**Lake Barracotta to Lake Wau Wauka.** Retrace your steps to the beach, and continue towards Gabo Island. A kilometre walk brings you to the *Riverine*—the first of several shipwrecks seen along the coast. All that now remains are its boilers. It ran aground in 1927.

You can shorten the day by 'cutting across' Gabo Island's large sand-spit. This is a fascinating area of low, wind-swept dunes. Jetsam can be found a great distance inland, having been washed up by the Pacific Ocean's incredible storms. After rain, pools of fresh water are found between the confused dune systems.

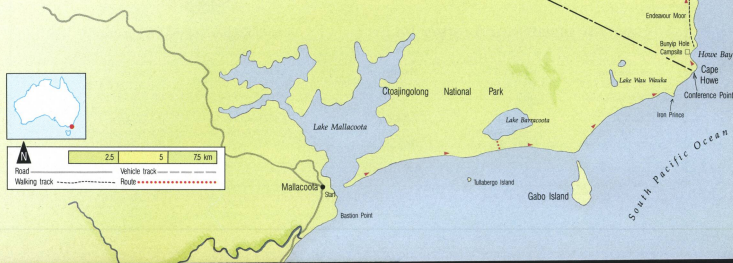


If time permits, the cathedral-like sea caves at Newtons Beach are worth inspecting.

Several kilometres later Lake Wau Wauka outflow is approached. Great camping is found among the tea-tree. Caution is required where the lake invades the sand beach as quicksand up to waist deep is often encountered along these edges.

**Lake Wau Wauka to Bunyip Hole.** Cross at the entrance. Enormous 40 metre high sand dunes are worthy of exploring before you continue along the coast towards Iron Prince. This is a rock promontory, named after the SS *Iron Prince* which hit an adjacent reef and ran aground at the border.

About a kilometre before the border beware of falling through 'sand traps'—areas where a thin crust of wind-blown sand has covered large boulders. The unsuspecting walker may break through and sustain an injury. This area can be avoided by walking along the rocks and boulders on the shore (if tides and ocean swells permit), or walking about 50 metres behind the dunes.





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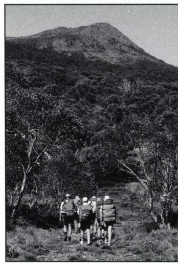
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According to the CMA map *Nadgee*, the border's eastern extremity is not at Cape Howe but at Conference Point. Cape Howe is 300 metres further east. The early surveyors—Black and Allan, who surveyed the border from Forest Hill (near the Cobberas and Cowombat Flat) and put in the original stone cairns last century—were out by 300 metres after 180 kilometres. They apparently discussed their error at this spot and decided to leave the 'border' alone.

A strange artistic masterpiece now marks this eastern-most corner of the NSW-Victorian border. In reality it is a government survey marker, but storms have torn away the sand base and exposed the large supporting pylon, leaving the cairn about three metres above the ground. Friends who visited the area in the late 1970s commented on the sandy beaches and dune system upon which the cairn rested. The rusting ruins of *SS Iron Prince* have also recently been uncovered, spreading across both States.

Head across the dunes to Howe Bay, or rock-hop round Cape Howe. In Howe Bay is another wreck. The trawler *Binjerra* hit an outlying reef in 1981 and was deliberately beached for a later, but unsuccessful, salvage operation.

Campsites can be found at both ends of the bay. The southern is the more protected, but furthest from reliable water if the soaks at the border have dried. Approaching the northern end of the bay, search for an indistinct track that climbs through the coastal bush and on to the heathland. Beyond the dunes, an open, swampy depression called the Bunyip Hole is a permanent spring.

**Bunyip Hole to Nadgee Lake.** Continue across Endeavour Moor and its associated heathland. In places the track is overgrown and care is required not to lose it. From the moor drop down to Nadgee Lake beach. There are two methods of finding the campsite: 1. Once across the other side, walk round the northern shore until a reedy watercourse which flows into the lake is reached. At this point there are tracks leading to the campsite, the pit toilet and further along the swamp to where water can be found. 2. Continue along the ocean beach to the rocks beyond the first gully. Walk up the rock-ledge on to the short heathland. A four-wheel-drive management track terminates here and can be followed northward towards Newtons Beach. Take the first turn left (about 500 metres) and follow this down to the park-like campsite.

**Nadgee Lake to Newtons Beach.** Follow the four-wheel-drive track north across Nadgee Moor. After about one and a half kilometres there is a T-intersection. Do not follow the main track which veers left into the forest. Take the right-hand track which is becoming overgrown. This leads you to a gully with campsites behind the sand dunes. Continue along the base of the dunes until a track leads over to the beach near Black Head.

Cross Nadgee River and walk upstream on the northern bank for about 50 metres and look for a foot track heading up to a four-wheel-drive track. Watch out for a small signpost (easily missed) that points the way to Osprey Look-out. You'll need to be determined to push your way through some thick melaaleuca, but the view is stunning.

## TRACK NOTES

Keep heading north along the vehicle track and when in doubt take the tracks running east. Little River is the next beautiful bay. Good tank water is available here (with some floaties) but camping is prohibited.

Follow the vehicle track northward to Newtons Beach—the only vehicle access and 'formal' campsite along the coast. Facilities include toilets, water, barbecues and tables.

**Newtons Beach to Jane Spiers Beach.** Walk along the length of Newtons Beach, drop packs at the gully and climb on to the rock-platform. At low tide, and if the gods have been kind, sand will have built up, enabling easy access to cathedral-like sea caves. If, however, storms have ripped out the mobile sands, a rockclimb (for the experienced only) along a narrow ledge above the crashing waves is required.

Regain packs and follow the gully to the first rock-ledge (small waterfall) and climb steeply through forest and on to heath on an ill-defined track. An occasional metal stake marks a very overgrown track; or follow animal tracks and with care push your way through the spiky hakea.

If the tide is low and the sea calm, drop very steeply into a second scrubby gully over the headland. Interesting rock formations are found along this section of beach.

If conditions are not suitable, follow the track through the scrub which gently descends on to Jane Spiers Beach.

**Jane Spiers Beach to Merrica River.** At the end of the beach, rock-hop up the major gully until life gets difficult and climb on to the right (northern and somewhat vague) spur. Continue through the thick, tiresome scrub up on to the Merrica River Fire Track. This section can be very slow going.

Usually there is no drinking-water at the Merrica River campsite. About two kilometres before the campsite, turn off on to the Merrica River Nature Trail for approximately one kilometre to reach the fresh water. Back-track to the junction and proceed to the beach.

**Merrica River.** An overgrown track starts behind the campsite which climbs and slides towards the southern entrance point. Tremendous views of cliffsides and tranquil waters of the estuary are seen from the high, rocky platforms. Exploring is best done by continuing along the vague track which eventually drops into a small boulder beach and rain-forest gully. By surveying the gully you will find an inland tunnel entrance of a sea cave. The beach gives access to a substantial rock-platform. Take extreme care when exploring this, as even moderate swells break over it.

**Merrica River to Wonboyn.** Cross the river and climb up the obvious gully. Shortly before it terminates, take to the scrub and slide round. Follow the coastline, dropping in and out of the occasional gullies until you can descend on to the rocky shore platforms near Greenglade.

Once on Wonboyn Beach, walk across the beach to the four-wheel-drive access track and follow this back to Wonboyn. ■

*Chris Sewell is a member of the Victorian Mountain Tramping Club and the Bairnsdale Bushwalking Club. Chris has bushwalked extensively in every State, ski toured over much of the Australian Alps, and has recently taken up sea kayaking. He lives in Bairnsdale, where he teaches in one of the smaller schools.*

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# TRAVEL PACKS

Up, up, and away; with Glenn Tempest

I stuffed a shirt or two into my old carpet-bag, tucked it under my arm, and started for Cape Horn and the Pacific.

Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

Serious travellers quickly discover the many limitations of conventional suitcases. Not only are suitcases awkward to carry over long distances but they look decidedly out of place in the throbbing back alleys of Marrakech or strapped to the side of a yak in the Himalayan foothills. On the other hand, rucksacks, while solving the carrying problem, are poorly designed for more conventional travel and, though perfect for the rigours of South-west Tassie scrub, are seemingly unable to withstand the almost legendary punishment dished out during ordinary airport handling. The notoriously lethal combination of rucksack-eating airport baggage carousels and rucksack buckles and shoulder-straps can and regularly does result in major conflict. Many embarrassed passengers have witnessed their dirty underwear emerging well ahead of their tattered rucksack after just such a confrontation. It was the welcome marriage between the suitcase and the rucksack which finally delivered an answer to every traveller's needs: the travel pack.

A travel pack is defined by its soft, wide-bodied style, hide-away carry harness and suitcase-style zip access. The pack thus functions exactly as a soft suitcase and can be quickly converted into a comfortable rucksack. All the models surveyed have at least one and usually two carry handles with a convenient shoulder-strap which can be removed when not in use. (Travel packs represented here are not to be confused with so-called hybrid designs which are aimed at travellers requiring a travel pack with top-loading features for more serious walking, climbing and skiing use.) The travel packs in this survey are, in some cases, selected from much larger ranges. For lack of space not all could be included.

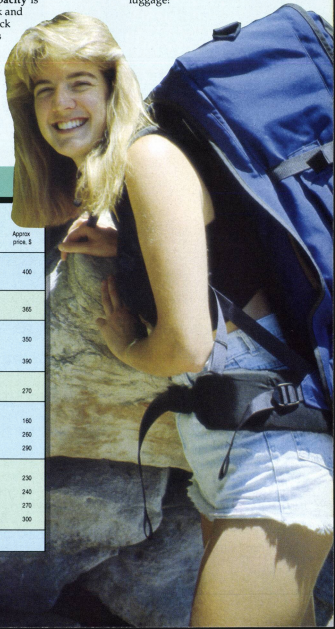
The manufacturer's claimed capacity is in litres and includes any day pack and external pockets. When a travel pack is available in various capacities (sometimes under different model names), only the largest-volume

model is represented. Because litre capacity is often inaccurate, the table also includes the **measured dimensions** of the main compartment. As one retailer observed: 'What most customers want is a very small and compact travel pack with a massive 120 litre capacity.' Some travel-pack manufacturers appear to have addressed this very need and have released a range of 'Tardis'-style travel packs which seemingly achieve very small external measurements while providing an enormous internal litre capacity! A few words of advice. No matter what size travel pack you choose you will certainly fill it, and the bigger your travel pack the more you will end up carrying. In turn, the enjoyment of your trip will be directly proportional to the weight of your luggage!

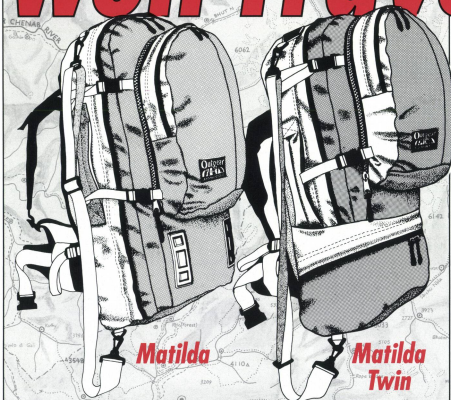
The travel pack—the derivative of a suitcase and rucksack amalgamation—is fast becoming the ideal method of carrying gear for overseas and local travellers alike. *Jenny Higgs collection*

## Wild Gear Survey Travel packs

	Claimed capacity, litres	Measured dimensions, l x w x h, centimetres	Day pack	Compartments	Internal compression straps/internal zip pockets	Harness, sizes available	Comments	Approx price, \$
<b>Aiking Australia</b> Valley	95	36 x 24 x 68	Y	1	Y/N	Adj, 2	Day pack sits inside front pocket	400
<b>Australian Geographic</b> AG Travel Pack	80	36 x 22 x 70	N	2	Y/Y	Adj, 1		365
<b>Berghaus New Zealand</b> TP1+	80	38 x 20 x 67	Y	1	Y/Y	Fixed, 3	Available without day pack. Toiletry bag included	350
TP2+	80	38 x 20 x 67	Y	2	Y/Y	Fixed, 3	Toiletry bag included	390
<b>Camp Trail/Eureka Korea</b> Superhute	75	36 x 18 x 62	Y	1	Y/N	Adj, 1		270
<b>Caribee Vietnam/China</b> Lisbon	60	36 x 17 x 57	Y	1	N/N	Adj, 1	Available without day pack	160
Malorca	70	40 x 19 x 66	Y	1	Y/N	Adj, 1		260
Phoenix	90	40 x 21 x 75	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 1		290
<b>DMH Korea</b> Leeyel	55	40 x 19 x 59	Y	1	Y/N	Adj, 1	Hidden external pockets	230
Skystar	59	37 x 22 x 64	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 1		240
Boeing	92	42 x 24 x 72	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 3		270
Megatop V	60	38 x 21 x 62	Y	2	Y/Y	Adj, 2		300
Adj adjustable								



# Well Travelled



**Matilda**

**Matilda Twin**

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OUTGEAR uses the best materials and components combined with state-of-the-art design and manufacturing. Matilda and Matilda Twin travel packs have zip-off day packs that can attach to the harness on the wearer's front for better security and load-balancing.

The Matilda has heavy-duty lockable zippers running the full length of the pack, providing total suitcase-style access to a single compartment. The versatile Matilda Twin has zippered separate entry to the base of the pack and a zip-away divider providing the option of one or two compartments.

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**TP 1**

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Model: TP 1  
Capacity: 70, 75, 80 litres  
Sizes: 2, 3, 4  
Weight: 2.3 kg



**TP 1 Plus**

A single-compartment pack that has a removable (zip-off) day pack. The day pack can be clipped to the front of the harness to help balance the load. Fully featured! Includes five internal organizer pockets and a removable toiletries bag.

Model: TP 1 Plus  
Capacity: 70, 75, 80 litres  
Sizes: 2, 3, 4  
Weight: 2.4 kg



**TP 2 Plus**

A versatile pack that has a front zip-opening, plus a zippered bottom compartment and a removable day pack. Fully featured! Includes five internal pockets and a removable toiletries bag.

Model: TP 2 Plus  
Capacity: 70, 75, 80 litres  
Sizes: 2, 3, 4  
Weight: 2.5 kg



**Hybrid**

A cross-over pack you can take travelling or bushwalking. Top-opening like a pack, but also a zippered front-opening and harness cover like a travel pack. The pack to take you anywhere.

Model: Hybrid  
Capacity: 80, 85, 90 litres  
Sizes: 2, 3, 4  
Weight: 2.7 kg

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Photos: Open Spaces Photography

## Wild Gear Survey Travel packs continued

	Claimed capacity, litres	Measured dimensions, l x w x h, centimetres	Day pack	Compartments	Internal compression-straps/internal zip pockets	Harness, sizes available	Comments	Approx. price, \$
<b>Eagle Creek</b> Mexico/USA Endless Journey	90	38 x 19 x 67	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 1	Bum bag included	530
<b>Fairplay</b> New Zealand Great Escape	85	35 x 20 x 70	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 2	65 litre version available	400
Chameleon	85	34 x 18 x 70	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 2	Toiletty bag included	455
<b>First Light</b> New Zealand Dimension	80	35 x 20 x 70	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 1	Smaller version available	410
<b>Kartimov</b> UK Jaguar	70	38 x 27 x 70	N	2	Y/N	Adj, 1		365
Cordoba	75	42 x 27 x 65	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 1		380
<b>Kathmandu</b> Korea Lhasa	80	40 x 25 x 73	N	1	Y/N	Adj, 2		200
Kashgar	80	37 x 24 x 67	Y	1	Y/N	Adj, 2		230
Deluxe Travel	80	37 x 24 x 70	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 2	Toiletty bag included	270
<b>Maspac</b> New Zealand Giant	65	30 x 19 x 67	N	1	Y/N	Adj, 2		270
Orient Express	75	37 x 20 x 60	Y	1	Y/N	Adj, 2		300
Serapiet	70	32 x 22 x 71	N	1	Y/N	Adj, 2	Canvas	350
Gemini	85	38 x 20 x 69	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 2	Simplified harness version available	420
<b>Mountain Designs</b> Korea Odyssey	55	40 x 19 x 64	N	1	Y/N	Adj, 2	Wet bag included	380
Exodus	58	40 x 18 x 64	Y	1	Y/N	Adj, 1	As above	390
Transglobe	75	38 x 21 x 71	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 2	As above	430
<b>Mountain Leisure Products</b> Hong Kong/China Pinnacle	70	32 x 17 x 70	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 1	Smaller version available	190
Wyoming	90	40 x 22 x 72	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 1	As above	210
Belliscio	75	33 x 15 x 65	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 1	Heavy-duty fabric	235
<b>Orangetop</b> FI Intrepid	68	40 x 18 x 61	Y	1	Y/N	Fixed, 1		300
<b>Outgear</b> Australia Yours!	65	40 x 21 x 67	Y	1	Y/N	Fixed, 3	Capacity varies according to back length	330
Malliba	76	40 x 22 x 80	Y	1	Y/N	Adj, 3	As above	380
Malliba Twin	75	40 x 20 x 80	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 3	As above	420
<b>Sherpa</b> Taiwan Asapt	62	38 x 18 x 67	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 1		210
Altitude	70	40 x 19 x 74	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 1		220
<b>Summit</b> Australia Travelpack	80	38 x 22 x 68	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 2	Single compartment available	310
<b>Tika</b> New Zealand Shalvo	65	34 x 22 x 59	N	1	Y/N	Fixed, 2		250
Linna	75	34 x 25 x 65	Y	1	Y/N	Fixed, 2	Toiletty bag included	300
Avion	85	37 x 22 x 65	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 2	Zip-off bum bag and toiletty bag included	350
<b>Tatania</b> Vietnam City Bound	55	34 x 27 x 60	Briefcase	2	Y/N	Fixed, 1	Zip-off briefcase. Ten litre gusset extension	245
Inter Rail	65	33 x 16 x 62	Y	1	Y/N	Adj, 1		260
Cargo Bag	60	33 x 20 x 65	Y	1	Y/N	Adj, 1	Hide-away side pockets	300
<b>Vango</b> China Traveler	75	38 x 20 x 65	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 2		205
<b>White Mountain</b> Korea Holiday	75	41 x 18 x 71	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 2	Smaller version available	295
<b>Wilderness Equipment</b> Australia Travel Pack 1	60	36 x 22 x 70	Y	1	Y/N	Adj, 4	Can be purchased without day pack	380
Travel Pack 2	60	41 x 22 x 69	Y	2	Y/N	Adj, 4		470

Adj adjustable

Many travel packs have a detachable **day pack**. Both manufacturers and retailers use this feature as a major selling point. In reality, however, the day pack is more often slung over the shoulder than zipped on to the back of the travel pack. It doesn't take long to realize the temptation a zip-off day pack presents as you battle through the crowd at New Delhi Railway Station. Some day packs have two small clips which can be attached across the wearer's chest on to the travel pack shoulder-straps. This provides a very convenient and far more secure method of carrying the day pack. Travel packs that do not offer a day pack are in most cases provided with a fixed pocket instead. The choice of a day pack is then left up to you (see the Gear Survey on day packs in *Wild* no 51).

Some travel packs have the main **compartment** divided with a handy zip partition. The smaller lower compartment has its own zip access and is often used for sleeping-bag storage or clothing which can be reached with little fuss. The larger compartment has access to three of its four sides with a continuous zipper. This zip is a major weak point on any travel pack and all those models surveyed provide back-up straps and quick-release buckles to reduce any strain. These straps also allow the contents to be compressed when the pack is not full. Nearly all travel packs surveyed have **internal compression-straps**, which are invaluable for keeping clothing firmly in place. Some models have **internal zip pockets** for storing either dirty clothing or small knick-knacks. Open pockets can also be useful for separating smaller items. A few models even come with a small, detachable toiletty bag which can then be hung up in the shower recess.

A travel pack **harness** generally provides much or all of the comfort of a regular rucksack. When not in use the harness zips neatly away. Harnesses are usually adjustable to cater for a variety of back lengths. Higher-quality models often provide a number of different sizes. Fixed harnesses are fine if that particular size happens to fit or if there are various fixed sizes on offer. Many manufacturers offer smaller back lengths for women, some of which are given a different model name. In most cases smaller back-length travel packs have less capacity than longer back-length models. Some travel packs require the internal alloy frames to be removed and then manually contoured to the customer's back profile at point of sale. This will generally provide a better initial fit than those models which shape into the user's back over time.

The **approximate price** is often a fair indicator of a travel pack's quality. The more money you are willing to part with the more features you will probably get. This is not to say that buying the most expensive travel pack on the market is a wise decision when you only intend to use it for a week in Bali. On the other hand, don't expect a cheap travel pack to last you through a three-year round-the-world marathon. ■

Glenn Tempest (see Contributors in *Wild* no 4) has been a Special Adviser to *Wild* since our second issue. He is a renowned raconteur, climber, cross-country skier and mountain photographer.



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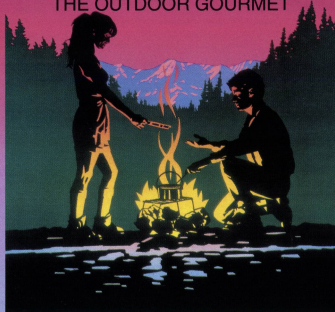
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Leonardo da Fettuccini  
Spaghetti in Mushroom Sauce  
Pasta Roma  
Cheese Nut Casserole  
Mushroom Pilaf with Vegetables  
Wild Rice Pilaf with Almonds  
Santa Fe Black Beans and Rice

### AlpineAire Seafood Main Courses — Two Serves

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Shrimp Alfredo  
Tuna with Noodles and Cheese



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Blueberry-honey Granola and Milk  
Apple Almond Crisp

### AlpineAire Side Dishes

Potatoes and Cheddar with Chives  
Vegetable Mix  
Brown Rice — cooked, freeze-dried  
Onions — chopped, dehydrated  
Tomato Powder (for paste, soup or juice)  
Tomatoes — diced, dehydrated  
Pure Cheddar Powder (for sauce or spread)  
Mushrooms — sliced, dehydrated

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# LIGHTWEIGHT DINNERS

Main-course meals for camping—a *Wild* survey

**B**ushwalking and other rucksack sports are certainly more enjoyable when the amount of weight you have to carry on your back is kept to an absolute minimum. Certain items must, of course, be carried for your basic survival. Food, or more particularly the weight of it, is one aspect of camping where with a little planning and forethought weight can be reduced without sacrificing taste and nourishment.

The accompanying table represents a variety of *main-course* meals, available from a number of manufacturers of lightweight foods, which are designed particularly for the rucksack sports. (There are, of course, many other types of lightweight foods, including a vast range of delicious desserts. We expect to cover desserts in a separate survey.) The table is by no means a complete list of main-course meals available from each producer; rather, it represents a selection of the meals from each



Dehydrated spare ribs? This dead cow near Mt Fainter, Victoria, could make a fine dinner—for wild animals. *Stephen Hamilton*

## Wild Equipment Survey Lightweight dinners

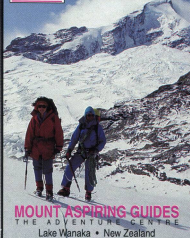
	Method of drying	Total dry weight, grams	Energy per serve, kilojoules	Carbohydrate per serve, grams	Protein per serve, grams	Fat per serve, grams	Number of serves per package	Approx price, \$
<b>Alliance New Zealand (13)</b>								
Sweet & sour lamb	Freeze-dried	75	1700	25.0	40.5	16.0	1	5.00
Vegetable noodle mummy	Freeze-dried	75	1600	52.0	16.0	12.1	1	5.00
Pineapple chicken curry	Freeze-dried	75	1500	52.0	20.0	7.5	1	5.70
Sliced beef, gravy & beans	Freeze-dried	75	1535	8.7	55.0	12.5	1	6.75
Beef casserole	Freeze-dried	300	1900	14.5	43.4	25.0	4-5	18.95
Sliced lamb, gravy & peas	Freeze-dried	300	1700	11.7	37.0	14.8	4-5	21.50
<b>AlpineAire USA (12)</b>								
Cheese nut casserole	Freeze-dried, dehydrated	184	1557	62.0	16.0	16.0	2	10.95
Leonardo's fettuccine	Freeze-dried, dehydrated	155	1235	45.0	15.0	3.0	2	10.95
Pasta Roma	Dehydrated	170	1373	47.0	18.0	1.0	2	10.95
Spaghetti in mushroom sauce	Dehydrated	155	1076	50.0	18.0	1.0	2	10.95
Shrimp Newburg	Freeze-dried, dehydrated	170	1331	49.0	16.0	6.0	2	12.95
Albacore tuna with noodles & cheese	Freeze-dried	155	1360	39.0	23.0	7.0	2	12.95
<b>Backpackers Pantry USA (12)</b>								
Vegetable stew	Freeze-dried	99	na	na	na	na	2	6.50
Spaghetti & sauce	Freeze-dried	202	na	na	na	na	2	7.50
Chili & beans	Freeze-dried	198	1633	48.0	28.0	18.0	2	9.50
Bombay lentil curry	Freeze-dried	220	na	na	na	na	2	11.95
No-cook lasagne	Freeze-dried	198	na	na	na	na	2	11.95
Chili cheese nachos	Freeze-dried	255	na	na	na	na	2	13.50
<b>Harvest Foodworks Canada (12)</b>								
Alfredo Primavera	Freeze-dried, dehydrated	216	1900	58.0	19.0	17.0	2	12.50
Bountiful pasta	Freeze-dried, dehydrated	247	2014	62.0	17.0	8.7	2	12.50
Chili Mexicana	Freeze-dried, dehydrated	219	1532	68.0	22.0	2.5	2	12.50
Garden vegetable stew	Freeze-dried, dehydrated	216	1549	75.0	16.0	2.3	2	12.50
Mediterranean pasta delight	Freeze-dried, dehydrated	237	1658	73.0	27.0	1.7	2	12.50
Stroganoff with sour cream & red wine sauce	Freeze-dried, dehydrated	246	1863	72.0	25.0	8.0	2	12.50
na information not available								

producer. The table should be used as a guide to what types of meals are available. Further, the table represents only the best-known producers of lightweight foods for the outdoors. There are now many other producers of lightweight meals as an inspection of the supermarket shelves will indicate. (Note that there are companies, such as Outback Oven, which also produce fine food for the rucksack sports, but their products are somewhat heavier [400-500 grams a package] and therefore are not covered by this survey.)

The column headings in the table are self-explanatory. (The number in brackets after the manufacturer's name represents the total number of main-course meals available from that manufacturer.) There is, however, one aspect of lightweight food that needs special mention. Many foods contain a large percentage of water. Lightweight foods are generally 'light' because the water has been drawn out of them; to reconstitute the food into a palatable dinner, the meals need only be heated after having water added to them. The process by which the food was dried can be either **freeze-dried** or **dehydrated**, and the column in the table indicates which process was used for each meal. (Note that in the case of Harvest foods and some AlpineAire foods, the meals contain freeze-dried and dehydrated ingredients.)

As stated in the freeze-dried food survey (*Wild* no 34), the freeze-drying process, which involves ice being drawn from frozen food in

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Astro strawberries

## TWO-PERSON BREAKFASTS

Buttermilk pancakes  
Maple syrup mix

## TWO-PERSON SNACKS

No-cook apple sauce  
Coffee cake  
FO fruit cocktail

## TWO-PERSON MAIN MEALS

Chilli and beans  
Chilli-cheese nachos  
Black-bean tamali pie

## Bombay lentil curry - new

No-cook lasagne  
Louisiana beans and rice  
Spaghetti sauce  
Spinach pasta stroganoff  
Vegetable stew  
Whole-wheat fettuccini

## TWO-PERSON VEGETABLES

No-cook green-beans  
almondine

## Potatoes au Gratin

## TWO-PERSON SWEETS

Apple (hot) cobbler  
Apple delite

Blueberry delite  
Cheese cake

Chocolate pudding

Fruit (hot) cobbler

Lemon cream pie - new

Mocha mousse pie

Peaches and cream pie  
Rice pudding and raisins  
**FOUR-PERSON PRODUCTS**  
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Spaghetti and sauce  
Vegetable stew  
Cheese cake

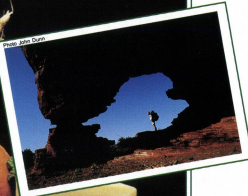
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a vacuum, alters the food value only marginally. According to a manufacturer of freeze-dried food, freeze-dried products are extremely porous and will re-hydrate in one to two minutes. The manufacturer also claims that the process of freeze-drying removes only the moisture content of the food leaving the cell structures intact, ensuring that the nutritional compounds are retained.

Dehydrated foods, on the other hand, are dried basically by heating the food (to about 45°C) and passing air over the food to remove the moisture (see *Wild Ideas*, *Wild* no 41). This is a harsher process than freeze-drying and leads to a breakdown of cell structure. Dehydrated products generally need substantially more boiling, and hence fuel, to prepare the meal than freeze-dried products although pre-soaking the product in water beforehand can help to reduce boiling time.

Stewart tried a representative sample of the lightweight foods available in Australia over the past few months. He found them all easy to prepare, and none of them particularly offensive to his taste-buds, but generally bland and uninspiring. There remains much room for improvement. On a positive note, there is a much greater selection of vegetarian dishes, and renewed emphasis on the nutritional value of the meals, many of which are free of artificial additives—check the packet for details.

Whichever meal you choose, remember that it is unlikely to satisfy your taste-buds in quite the same way as its fresh equivalent. After some experience, you may find that the addition of some herbs and spices, or perhaps some light, fresh vegetables (such as mushrooms or beans) may make the meal a real delight. Experimentation is the name of the game!

Stewart Spooner and Glenn van der Knijff

canvas base. The Yandee (RRP \$79.65) and the Kora (RRP \$69.50) weigh 650 grams and 500 grams, respectively.

## CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

### Travelling the planet

One Planet has recently brought out four new jackets. The *Midnight Express* features a fully seam-sealed, two-layer Tas-Soft Gore-Tex shell and a hood that folds into the collar. There are two touch-tape pockets on the outside, two inside pockets (one for a map) and there is a waist draw-cord. It closes with a full-length zip and press-studs. RRP \$299. The *Great Wall* is essentially the same jacket as the *Midnight Express* except that it is made from Milair rather than Gore-Tex. RRP \$249.



One Planet's *Great Wall* and *Midnight Express* jackets. **Left**, the Yandee and Kora day packs from Outgear. **Top right**, the Scarpa T2 Telemark boot. **Glenn Tempest**. **Right**, the Colorado sport sandal from Scholl.

The *Big Apple* is a hip-length Milair popover that provides protection from wind and rain. This lightweight top has a hood which folds into the collar, a front zip-pocket and folds away to a small size. RRP \$199. The *Times Square* is fully lined and is made from two-layer Tas-Soft Gore-Tex. As with the other jackets, the hood hides in the collar when not in use, and it is closed with a full-length zip with double storm-flap and press-studs. There are two front pockets with a hand-warmer pocket behind each one. RRP \$370.

### Storm warning

A new range of three polypropylene heavyweight thermal tops from *Bertoni*, the brand name of *Peter Storm*'s thermal wear, was released last year. The item we've received for review is the 201, a long-sleeved, crew-neck top that is brushed on the inside for extra comfort. It is available in various colours and sizes and costs around \$40. The other garments in the range are a short-sleeved top and long johns, each selling for about the same price as the 201.

Also from Peter Storm is the *Mountain Jacket*, a new parka, which is part of the 900 series of

Microlight breathable/waterproof garments. The jacket has a soft feel and features two inside pockets, a map pocket, and is closed with a full-length zip and press-studs. It also has a waist draw-cord and a hood which folds away into a high collar. The garment is available in various sizes and colours and sells for \$360. Both Peter Storm items reviewed are widely available in outdoor shops.

### Cool plastic

Last year Scarpa introduced the *Terminator*, the world's first all-plastic Telemark boot. New for this winter, Scarpa has produced the T2, a second model, to attract a larger market of cross-country skiers. The new model is similar in appearance to its big brother, but features a substantially lower cut, is lighter and more flexible, and offers extra comfort for touring while still maintaining a high degree of downhill control. Two ratchet buckles secure the laced inner boot. The cuff can be pivoted and locked into a vertical climbing position and also a 19 degree forward lean for carving turns on steep slopes. RRP \$559.

Glenn Tempest



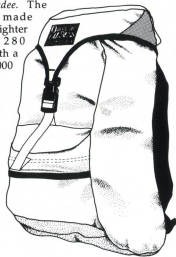
### More sandals

Scholl, the manufacturer of foot-care products, has now released two sport sandals, each with a sole made of Implus, an open-cell foam that, it is claimed, provides maximum shock absorbability and comfort. The *Nevada* (RRP \$64.95) and the *Colorado* (RRP \$69.95) have a similar look to most other sport sandals, but differ from each other in that they use different touch-tape strapping systems. They are widely available, including in pharmacies.

## RUCKSACKS

### Outgear day packs

The *Yandee* and *Kora*, new 24 litre day packs from Outgear, feature a single front-pocket with double storm-flap and a lid with stretch side-panels, so that it fits snugly round the body of the pack. The Yandee is made with Fabrec 1000 canvas, or if made from the superior Fabrec 400 canvas, it is called the *Ultra Yandee*. The Kora is made from the lighter Fabrec 280 canvas with a Fabrec 1000



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## MISCELLANEOUS

## Espresso in the wild

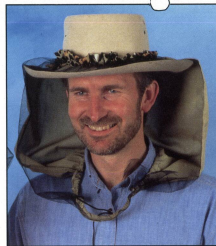
If you're a connoisseur of coffee, the *Mini Espresso Maker* from Italian manufacturer *GSI Outdoors* is for you. This compact appliance is easy to assemble and makes espresso coffee in less than two minutes. It comes with a Graniteware speckled blue enamel mug which, although only half the size of a normal mug, holds about the same volume as a 'short black' that you'd order in a restaurant. The appliance is dishwasher safe, weighs about 270 grams and sells for \$39.50. It is distributed by *Spelean* and is widely available in outdoor shops.



The *Mini Espresso Maker*. **Top right**, *Outgear's Plus One*. **Right**, the *No Flies Net* from *James Moore Enterprises*. **Far right**, the *Rap Rak 6* from *PFH*. **Below**, the *Ultra Kakadu* from *Ultra Performance Floatation Developments*.

## In the bag

The *Plus One* from *Outgear* is a tote bag and weather-proof pack cover in one. As a tote bag, it protects your rucksack from abrasion and from snagging in machinery at airport luggage terminals, and it features two



adjustable side-straps with buckles which act as carry-straps. With the zippered panel (which covers the harness on your rucksack) folded down, the *Plus One* converts to a pack cover. The carry-straps can be clipped across the harness of the rucksack, which makes it nearly impossible for the cover to come off when you're bashing through scrub, and it is tightened with the aid of a draw-cord. The *Plus One* is available in three sizes, is made of heavy-duty coated nylon, uses lockable zippers and weighs 545 grams. RRP \$79.99.

## Save me!

The new *Ultra Kakadu* personal flotation device (or life jacket), from *Ultra Performance Floatation Developments*, is a high-cut vest which provides six kilograms of upward thrust to keep you afloat. It is constructed from foam with a nylon liner, and features a 25 millimetre webbing adjustment belt and a

self-draining mesh panel to let water out. It comes in a range of sizes and is available from specialist water sports retailers. RRP \$89.

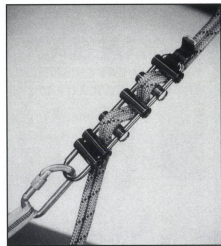
## Pyromaniacs

The *Sparky*, distributed by *Spelean*, is a fire-starter which apparently produces a spark seven times hotter than that of a match. Unlike a match, it will produce a hot spark even when wet and is ideal for lighting camp fires and stoves. The kit, which includes flint, magnesium rod, striker and pouch, is small and fits easily into a pocket or on to a key-ring. It sells for \$18.90 and is guaranteed for 1000 strikes.

Also distributed by *Spelean* is the *Enviro-Match*, a fire-starter which is similar to the *Sparky* mentioned above. It uses a man-made flint and is guaranteed for 25 000 strikes. RRP \$28.

## No more flies

As a result of a trip to outback Western Australia, a place where the flies attack in swarms, Brian James revived the old idea of facial nets designed to keep flies off your face, where they are most annoying. The *No Flies net* fits on to virtually any hat with the aid of an elasticized top, eliminates the use of sprays and sells for around \$5.60. The *No Flies net* can also be purchased with a *No Sun* panel that keeps the sun off the back of your neck. Together, they cost around \$9.50. Distributed by *James Moore Enterprises*.



## Descenders

Sydney-based company *PFH* has produced two new descenders, or specialized abseil devices. The stainless steel *Rap Rak 4 Gate* and the *Rap Rak 6 Gate* (termed 'rappel racks' on the instructions) have been tested to a breaking-point of over 1200 kilograms. The *Rap Rak 4 Gate* has two opening gates, should be used with 9-11 millimetre double rope (not considered suitable for use with a single rope) and is recommended for use by people whose weight does not exceed 90 kilograms. It sells for around \$50. The *Rap Rak 6 Gate* is designed for single or double 9-11 millimetre rope, and the extra friction provided by the six gates makes it ideal for use by beginners, cavers (who often use a single rope), and people who weigh over 90 kilograms. It retails for around \$65.





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### A change of staff

*Cascade Designs*, the maker of Therm-a-Rest mattresses, has now produced a range of *stuffs* (probably better known as walking-sticks to most walkers) under the name of *Traks*. Walking-stuffs are fast becoming functional pieces of outdoor equipment, providing support and balance (particularly on steep and rough terrain) and they help to reduce stress on hip- and knee-joints while aiding the development of upper-body muscles. The *Traks* range consists of 13 *stuffs* offering

various lengths and features. Some of the features are: a camera attachment on the handle; a steel point with a removable rubber tip; telescopic extension and lock; and adjustable wrist-strap. Retail prices range from \$48 to \$110 and *Traks* *stuffs* are distributed in Australia by *Grant Minervini Agencies*.

### Pure, clean water

Distributed in Australia by *John Star* are the *Canteen* and *Insert* and *The Bottle*, water

purifiers from *AccuFilter*. It is claimed that these have been laboratory tested and found to be effective against many diseases, bacteria and viruses. The purifiers discussed here clean water through five different stages; three-stage purifiers are also available but are probably not as suitable for bushwalking and other rucksack-sports uses. The *Canteen* and *Insert* (costing approximately \$51) provide purified drinking-water for up to 40 days, and the filter will clean as much as 75 litres. The *Bottle* (costing approximately \$56) is the shape of a bicycle water-bottle, provides safe water for up to 160 days, and the filter will purify 150 litres of water. Replacement filters are available for both models.

### Star attractions

The *Nuwick 44-hour* and *Nuwick 120-hour* candles are self-contained sources of lighting, heating and cooking. Each contains a movable and reusable waterproof wick which will burn for up to 40 hours, and up to three wicks can be used simultaneously. Each candle kit includes wicks, tweezers (to move the wicks) and matches as well as the container of paraffin. The *Nuwick 44-hour* and *Nuwick 120-hour* candles are claimed to be non-toxic and sell for \$15.50 and \$22.50, respectively. Distributed in Australia by *John Star*.

### One kind of bag...

The *Travellers Toilet Bag* by *Source* can be hung by the touch-tape strap, or ring-shaped hook, which bundles the bag together. It has four separate pockets; two decent-size zip pockets, a mesh zip-pocket, and a smaller touch-tape pocket that contains a waterproof plastic pouch to store soap, toothpaste and other messy items of toiletry. It also has two strange built-in features which can be used to hold a small mirror, or other small items. RRP \$32.90. Source products are distributed in Australia by *Nomad Travel Equipment*.

### ...and another

*Source* has also released its version of the *water-bag*. Named *Flexi-flask*, it is different in appearance from a conventional water-bag, utilizing a screw-in nozzle that connects to a bladder inside a carry-bag. The *Flexi-flask* can be worn round your waist or buckled to the outside of your rucksack, and can be bought in an insulated version. The *Flexi-flask* is available in a 1.5 litre capacity (RRP \$34.90 or \$44.90 insulated) or a 2.5 litre capacity (RRP \$39.90 or \$49.90 insulated).

### Trading blows

New to Australia is the name *Great Outdoors* on a chain of outdoor shops. Independently owned, the shops are under licence to *Sunshine Ellis* and sell *Great Outdoors* and *Sunshine Leisure* tents and related products.

*Australian Coleman* is now the sole distributor of *Epigas* camping products in Australia after acquiring *Epigas*'s previous manufacturer and distributor *Taymar*. The *Epigas* range of camping equipment includes lightweight butane lanterns and stoves. ■

New products (on loan to *Wild* and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

## TRIX

### Preventing sunburn

Cool it, baby; by Geoff Wayatt

The spring equinox warns us of increasing sun intensity capable of scorching and shredding the faces of snow- and mountain-tourers. Most people are well aware that the skin's natural melanin protection varies between individuals and is inadequate in the intense, ultraviolet light of an alpine day.

The most dangerously deceptive situation for severe sunburn is a clouded day. Although the brightness appears low, high levels of long-wave, ultraviolet light can penetrate thin clouds or mist. There is no dark ground cover to absorb radiated light and it is bounced back and forth between the cloud ceiling and snow. The indirectly scattered ultraviolet light can find the smallest unprotected spot; especially the underside of nose and chin, behind the ears and even the roof of your mouth!

Protection comes in several forms including avoidance, sunscreen lotions and masks. An even and thorough sunscreen cover is critical so a small, lightweight mirror or reflecting sunglasses can be useful for cream application.

The sunscreen factor rating system indicates theoretical exposure times, but these should be qualified by user factors: uneven cream cover, sweating, licking of lips and nose-wiping all speed up burning times. In most alpine situations the highest protective creams should always be used, and applied every 15 to 20 minutes.

Zinc cream provides a total block and its adherent property is great for lips and nose. However, it tends to dry out and burning occurs in the cracks, so I often mix some sun-cream with the zinc in a film canister and place it in a handy pocket.

The importance of retaining skin moisture has long been recognized by major cosmetic companies in their face-creams for women. An evening moisturizer is vital to skin care and reduces peeling after a day in alpine sun or wind.

The only complete protection for long exposure and fair-skinned people comes from masks and hats. Foreign-legion-

naire-style caps are in vogue, but check the neck-flap for adequate ear cover. It's easy to sew and touch-tape a square of checked gingham to your favourite cap; this can be easily removed when not needed, and used as a chess-board.

For the snow amphitheatre or glacier, two large silk scarves can combine well. Place one over the nose and mouth cowboy-style; the other Bedouin-style under a cap to protect neck and ears. Looseness is the key to comfort in hot conditions to avoid glasses steaming up and to have plenty of ventilation for breathing. A white business shirt or blouse complements the headgear in reflective coolness.

The ultimate sun-hat has been created by New Zealand doctor, high-altitude climber and medical expert Dick Price, who built his custom *Sunshelter* with large flaps fore and aft. These are controlled by cords adjusted with prusik (sliding) knots to counteract windy conditions. Head ventilation is supplied by netting-covered holes in the sides of the hat. A brightly coloured exterior reflects heat and the sun's long-wave radiation, and dark material under the visor reduces glare and eye-strain from reflected short-wave radiation. Although its high-fashion potential may be dubious, the ability of Dick's innovation to shield the most severe sunlight has been well proven on six major Himalayan expeditions. ■

*Wild* welcomes readers' contributions to this section; payment is at our standard rate. Send to the address at the end of this department.



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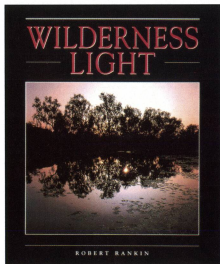
Major new books

## BOOKS

### Wilderness Light

by Robert Rankin (Rankin Publishers, 1993, RRP \$39.95).

Over the last few years Robert Rankin has become one of Australia's most prolific and best-known self-publishing wilderness photographers. This, his second book after *Classic Wild Walks of Australia*, appears, on first brief inspection, as a cross between a coffee-table picture-book and a step-by-step guide to taking better photographs. *Wilderness Light*, however, is substantially more than this. Rankin is obviously fascinated with lighting and composition and with these two major themes he successfully weaves philosophy, art, history and style into a very worthy work.



The colour photographs are generally superb, in fact better than anything I have seen of Rankin's. His inspiration obviously stems from the likes of Olegas Truchanas and Peter Dombrovskis and for this he makes no apologies. Each photograph is conveniently related to the text, where Rankin explains his concepts by example—a method which works very well. His statement, 'Of the many visual arts, it is photography which involves the most complex technology' is certainly true and it is to his credit that he wisely leaves camera technology behind and concentrates on taking good photographs. As he says: 'Modern photographic equipment simply makes recording the chosen image easier and quicker; it does not enhance it.' A brief chapter is devoted to the technical considerations of taking pictures and here again Rankin has avoided bogging the reader down with too much scientific jargon. In the end, Rankin's advice is uncomplicated and easy to follow.

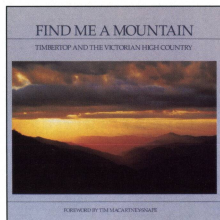
Brief environmental notes appear toward the back of the book and put into perspective

the true value of each wilderness area in which the photographs were taken. The book itself is casebound, of 160 pages and includes 44 colour plates. *Wilderness Light* should appeal to anyone who loves the outdoors and enjoys recording wilderness scenes on film.

Glenn Tempest

### Find Me a Mountain—Timbertop and the Victorian High Country

(Geelong Grammar School, 1993, RRP \$39.95 plus \$1.50 for postage and packaging, from GGS Timbertop PB, via Mansfield, Vic 3722).



To mark the 40th anniversary of the opening of Timbertop—Geelong Grammar School's famous campus in the Victorian Alps—the school has published a collection of writings and photos by past and present students and staff. This is a beautifully produced, large-format book in which Timbertop the campus takes a (far) back seat to the surrounding mountains. While not every photo, and certainly not every brief piece of writing, is a winner, many are; the result is something which few with a weakness for Victoria's magnificent high country will be able to resist despite an irritating number of walking groups that are too large for such a fragile environment. *Find Me a Mountain* captures the spirit of the Australian high country as few books have.

Chris Baxter

### Being Outside

by Tim Macartney-Snape (Australian Geographic, 1993, RRP \$19.95).

Australia's most feted mountaineer has written a different kind of instructional tome. He ably guides us through familiar terrain with chapters covering outdoor skills, equipment and safety. But the trek also includes side-trips into the author's experiences and philosophy. This is a hand-somely produced 'how to do it' book that also doubles as a chronicle of 'how and why I did it'.

As though to proclaim this difference, the cover of *Being Outside* is not a routine photo of happy campers but one of the author spread-eagled mid-air over an outback water-hole. This exuberant image of 'letting go' evokes the ethos of the book. For Macartney-Snape the natural world is the 'home of the soul' and a deeper contact with the outdoors is essential if we are to be reconciled with the 'first man' in ourselves.

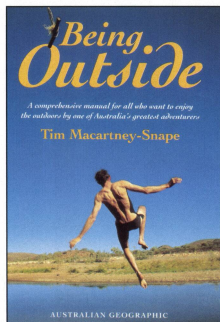
Such ideals are reflected in vignettes from the author's outdoor apprenticeship which preface discussions of gear and bushcraft. Most of the anecdotes are instructive and entertaining but some seem like padding, such as the preamble to the sleeping-bag section which recounts Macartney-Snape's decision to buy a warmer bag.

Readers hungry for hard information might become impatient with these digressions, as well as a lack of signposting. To find out about footwear, for example, you have to wander to the end of the chapter titled 'Comfort in the cold'.

Given the author's predilections, it's no surprise to find strong coverage of matters frosty and lofty. Some of the best advice deals with snow-caves, alpine weather, glacier travel and the like. We also learn about gathering water up to 6000 metres, face-masks, and stapling gaiters to plastic boots. But one wonders how pertinent some of these hints are for those who venture out closer to home and sea-level.

*Being Outside* may not be the ultimate reference manual, but it is a spirited discourse on outdoors life by one of our most eminent outside persons.

Quentin Chester



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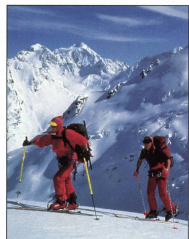
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Photo Glenn van der Knijff

MM14

## Blue Mountains to Bridgetown— The Life and Journeys of Barrallier

by Andy Macqueen (published by the author, 1993, RRP \$14.95 plus \$3.00 postage, from 39 Bee Farm Rd, Springwood, NSW 2777).

Of all the major explorers of the Blue Mountains, Francis Barrallier is the one of greatest interest to bushwalkers. There are two reasons for this. First, the country through which Barrallier travelled, in particular the terminus of his journey in the heart of the Kanangra wilderness, is very popular with bushwalkers. Second, the records left by Barrallier are not definitive statements showing where his party actually went. This leaves it open for any bushwalker who has visited this part of the southern Blue Mountains to try to interpret descriptions in Barrallier's log and match them with real places.

Over the years many well-known bushwalkers such as Myles Dunphy and Paddy Pallin have tried to determine Barrallier's actual route. The 'accepted' interpretation of the route is due to another well-known bushwalker, Ray Elise-Mitchell. The author of this new book has not only researched Barrallier's life but has re-enacted his major journey. Macqueen is a well-known bushwalker and past president of the Springwood Bushwalking Club. He presents a convincing case for supporting the major parts of Elise-Mitchell's interpretation based not only on the original log left by the explorer (in French) but on his original map. The latter is slightly different from the one published in *Historical Records of Australia*.

This book is of great interest to all who have bushwalked in the southern Blue Mountains. Where Barrallier actually went will probably always remain a mystery. This book presents a very good case for one particular route—read it and see whether you agree.

David Noble

## Coxs River—Discovery, History and Development

by Jim Barrett (published by the author, 1993, RRP \$10 plus \$1.00 postage, from 65 Brook Rd, Glenbrook, NSW 2773).

Jim Barrett is a bushwalker old enough to have walked in the Burrigorang valley before it was flooded by the waters of Warragamba Dam. His deep affection for this magnificent country shows in this small volume.

The Cocks River flows in a valley half-way between Katoomba and Kanangra Walls and is a bushwalker's paradise. It skirts the Wild Dog Mountains, is towered over by the Gangerang and Krungle Bungle Ranges and the famous three peaks (Mts Cloudmaker, Paralyser and Guougang) and shortly before flowing into what is now Lake Burrigorang is joined by the dancing waters of the Kowmung River.

This small book outlines the efforts of early explorers, surveyors and farmers in pioneering this country. The rich heritage of the Gundungurra Aboriginal tribe is added. With

over 100 pages of text and many extremely interesting black-and-white photographs, this book is strongly recommended. A companion volume on the Kowmung River should be available shortly.

DN

## Blue Mountains Dreaming

edited by Eugene Stockton (Three Sisters Productions, 1993, RRP \$14.95).

Within 30 years of their first contact with Europeans, the Aborigines of the Blue Mountains had almost disappeared. Few of the people who came to live in the Blue Mountains learned to appreciate their rich heritage. This book, which is available in bookshops in the Blue Mountains, presents up-to-date and fascinating information about the culture of the original inhabitants. Bushwalkers occasionally come across cave art and sharpening grooves on their travels—this book will help to explain the significance of these and other fascinating aspects of Aboriginal life.

DN

## Black 'n' White 'n' Green

edited by George Hirst (Envirobook, 1993, RRP \$14.95).

Sub-titled 'Australia's top cartoonists draw the line on the environment', this collection of cartoons was also on exhibition in Townsville, Queensland.

The timber and uranium industries, in particular, come under the artists' rapier-like scrutiny in this wide-ranging collection which should appeal to many *Wild* readers. It would make a good gift for those friends whose awareness of green issues might benefit from subtle stimulation.

CB



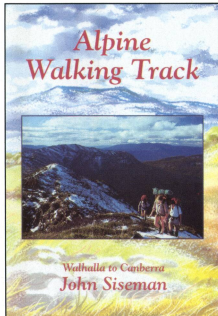
Wayne Thomas Cat 75

Cartoon by Wayne Thomas, reproduced from *Black 'n' White 'n' Green*.

## Alpine Walking Track— Walhalla to Canberra

by John Siseman (Pindari Publications, second edition 1993, RRP \$23.95).

The production of this revised and updated edition of the 1988 classic is significantly better than the original. Photo reproduction, including a handful of colour photos, is generally excellent, and in the main they are well worth looking at. Similarly, the other



elements of this book are clean and attractive. There are minor changes to the track description for the section between Walhalla and the Mitta Mitta River, and extensive change for the following section, as far as Cowombat Flat.

CB

## A Walkers Guide to The Tops to Myall's Heritage Trail

by Hanns Pacy et al (Lions Club of Tea Gardens, 1993, RRP \$5.90 plus \$0.85 postage, from Lions Club, Tea Gardens, NSW 2324).

This booklet describes the trail from Careys Peak in the Barrington Tops National Park to Myall Lakes on the coast. The walk can be done in one push or as a series of day walks. This guide presents plenty of information about the walk, vegetation, campsites, maps and ecological notes. Two interesting features are profiles of the walk (as well as the maps) and a selection of songs to sing around the camp fire. The booklet also outlines the responsibilities of users of the bush in ensuring minimal impact.

The local Lions Club which produced this guide should be commended for its initiative.

DN

## Tasmanian Wilderness— World Heritage Values

edited by S J Smith and M R Banks (Royal Society of Tasmania, 1993, RRP \$34.50).

This book is based on a series of papers presented at a symposium held in 1990. The purpose was to highlight the universal significance of the Tasmanian wilderness. Most of the papers were written by scientists and outline the biological and historical significance of the region.

The most interesting paper is the keynote address by E G Whitlam, which provides an illuminating insight from a politician's perspective into the process of how Australia came to be part of the World Heritage



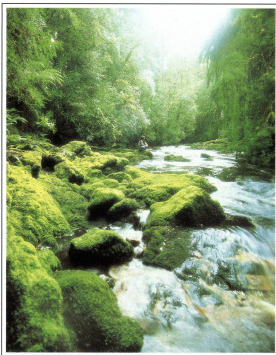
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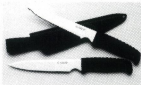
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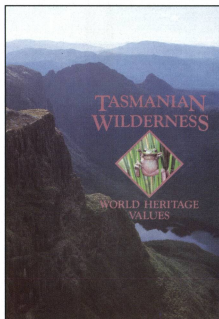
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Convention. After reading his paper you will realize that we owe a lot to the far-sighted federal politicians of the 1970s.

The major fault I found with the symposium papers is the impression given that the area has been reserved for scientific reasons alone and that only those reasons matter. We all know that the World Heritage Area was, in fact, created because it is 'wilderness', and not for science to study. Its wilderness value and the conflicts of this with users are two topics



that were largely ignored. The general emphasis of most writers is simply to remove the conflicting visitors!

Read *Tasmanian Wilderness* to gain an appreciation of the area's unique features, but remember that it is biased towards the views of the scientific community.

John Chapman

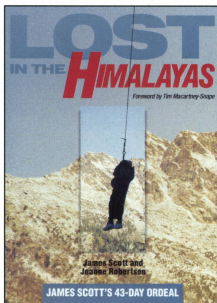
## Lost in the Himalayas

by James Scott & Joanne Robertson  
(Lothian Publishing, 1993, RRP \$19.95).

James Scott's heavily publicized close encounter with death is a gripping tale indeed. The parallel accounts told by 'the lost' (Scott) and 'the rescuer' (his sister, Joanne Robertson) reveal the humbling details of Scott's remarkable 43-day ordeal in the Nepal Himalayas in mid-winter after being separated in a blizzard from a trekking companion.

Without Scott's commitment to stay alive and Robertson's determination for the search to succeed, the result would have been very different. However, *Lost* is not only a description of events that took place, but also a valuable insight into human nature. Both writers share frankly their inner selves—their private thoughts, their despair, their human frailties—so that we come better to understand the battles they both fought for Scott's survival. Their success is a tribute to their perseverance and self-discipline.

*Lost* begs the question: How would we cope in similar circumstances? Would we succumb to the temptation to give up, or would we



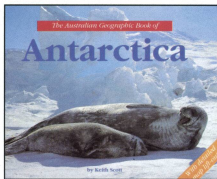
discover those special, untapped inner resources as Scott and Robertson did?

Sue Baxter

## The Australian Geographic Book of Antarctica

by Keith Scott (Australian Geographic, 1993, RRP \$29.95).

Not only for most Australians, but for people all over the world, Antarctica has become current parlance and common coin. A most intriguing part of 'our fantastic planet', it is now accessible to thousands, fulfilling lifelong dreams of adventure. Excellent images of subjects ranging from the minugia of plankton and mosses to those of penguins and petrels, seals and immense whales may be taken for granted in this book. They are elements of adventure, as are the aurora and the blizzard.



Vicariously are shared the great, even terrible, trials: from Douglas Mawson at the end of endurance, trudging back companionless to Commonwealth Bay; with Scott and Amundsen at the South Pole, or Shackleton immured by the merciless flocks of the Weddell Sea. Influential also are the reports of innumerable men and women, our contemporaries, returning from years spent on national missions within the icy confines of the Antarctic Circle.

The memorable journeys may be traced on the informative map provided by the

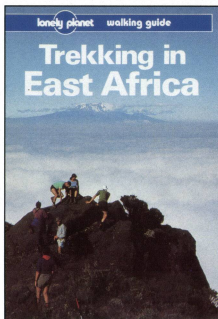
Australian Geographic Society. For the majority Antarctica is still an instant destination attained by the magic of colour photography and, as constant as may be, by vivid verbal depiction both descriptive and analytical. The former crystallizes the eternal nature of the far south; the latter the ardour of scientific discovery. In *The Australian Geographic Book of Antarctica* Keith Scott's carefully planned chapters receive both adequate space and the necessary attention. He encourages the reader both to ask and to answer questions. For each, the development of the grand theme, from the environment and logistic training in central Tasmania, the physical preparation and loading in Hobart, the briefing of scientific and technical personnel, the question is posed: 'Can we manage Antarctica?' From signing on the dotted line to mounting the barbed arrow of the expedition, keeping its course truly through the long months until the relief ship breaks the white horizon, whether for the expectant resident of the far south, the armchair traveller or the treasurer of indelible memories, this book deserves space.

John Béchervaise

## Trekking in East Africa

by David Else (Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$18.95).

Africa has not traditionally been considered a trekking destination, perhaps conjuring up visions of being stalked by large, carnivorous animals. However, the highland areas, particularly in East Africa, provide a wide range of trekking opportunities, mostly free of



large animals. Until now, no practical guide to these areas has been available. *Trekking in East Africa*, a new title in Lonely Planet's growing range of walking guides, fills this niche more than adequately.

The trekking notes in previous Lonely Planet travel guides were often casual and inaccurate. However, the recent specific 'walking guides' are comprehensive and accurate, and this title is no exception. As

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applies to all guidebooks, the information in *Trekking in East Africa* should not be taken as gospel, but it is as up to date as possible, with costs (for example) to 1992.

*Trekking in East Africa* describes a range of trekking routes in most of the major mountain areas of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Malawi—the most accessible of the East African countries. Several trekking styles are discussed. However, a guide is probably most useful for those doing it themselves. The treks described range from the standard route up popular Mt Kilimanjaro to little-visited Mt Elgon, and include spectacular Mt Kenya and the legendary Rwenzori Range.

The route descriptions in *Trekking in East Africa* contain a considerable amount of detail, perhaps too much in some cases if (like me) you prefer to discover things for yourself. Nevertheless, the information is logically laid out and the introductory sections, including both facts for the trekker and basic information for travel in East Africa, are up to Lonely Planet's usual high standard. The maps provided are, of necessity, small but are adequate for descriptive purposes. Larger commercially available maps are referenced. Useful books on the area's natural history and people are listed for background reading as the information in the guide on these unique aspects of the region is rather brief.

If you are heading for East Africa with trekking in mind and want a portable publication that at least touches on anything you are likely to want to know, *Trekking in East Africa* is it.

Grant Dixon

## Places Worth Keeping

by Tim Bonyhady (Allen & Unwin, 1993, RRP \$19.95).

One is rarely privileged to read a book that is a milestone in the conservation movement. *Places Worth Keeping* is such a book.

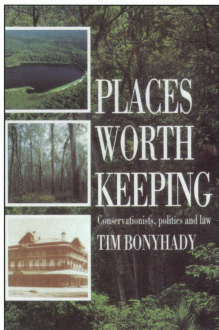
The first thing apparent in the text is the painstaking and detailed research that informs it. The material is carefully footnoted and thoroughly indexed. The number and range of sources are impressive, ranging from personal communications with the main players to books and newspaper and journal articles (many of some obscurity). But this does not detract from the sweep of the story Bonyhady sets out to tell.

Through the story of dozens of the major conservation battles of our time—including Fraser Island, old-growth forests in various parts of Australia, the Mt Etna caves, the Franklin, Greenpeace's waterways campaign, and others—Tim Bonyhady examines the effectiveness of various tactics, and the factors in our legal and political system which have led to success and failure.

The accounts are riveting. *Wild* reported the legal and campaign machinations in relation to the quarrying of Speaking Tube cave at Mt Etna, an important habitat for the vulnerable ghost bat. The Queensland Speleological Society withdrew its action to test the legality of the quarrying after the Queensland Supreme Court, aided by the attitude of the High Court, placed costs obstacles in the way of the litigation without allowing the merits of the matter to be heard. Even knowing the outcome, it is with a genuine reliving of the

pain that one reads of the reaction of Central Queensland Cement:

Rather than wait until it needed the limestone, which its general manager had admitted would not be for ten years, the company destroyed Speaking Tube at once. After placing a screen of trucks in front of the cave in a vain bid to block the waiting television cameras, the company blasted Speaking Tube on 12 June. The following day, its employees completed their work, blasting the cave four more times.



story is always supported by careful, and at times critical, analysis. The flaws in the legal system, in campaign tactics and in the political process are identified and discussed.

Governments in Australia have shown that they may not be trusted to protect even those areas identified as the common heritage of humanity, let alone areas of national significance. Time and again issues that are tangential to the direct environmental problem impinge upon decision making. For these reasons there will always be campaigns to save our natural environment.

*Places Worth Keeping* is timely. If there was ever a time when slogans were enough, that time has passed. Careful research and wise action are needed for successful environmental campaigning, and a book like this provides an analysis of campaigns over the years which will be invaluable to those who seek inspiration from the success of others or caution from the many campaign failures.

Tim Bonyhady's book deserves to be read by all serious conservationists in this country.

Brian Walters

## Paddy Pallin's Bushwalking and Camping

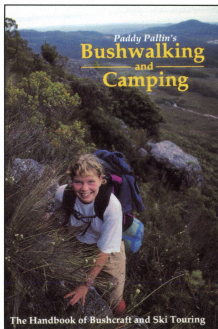
by Tim Lambie (Envirobook, 13th edition 1993, RRP \$14.95).

There are numbers of 'textbooks' on bushwalking and camping. Now there is a further edition of the popular Paddy Pallin book.

This book retains the eccentric views on some issues seen in earlier editions. Few walkers will feel that 'abducing' of the side of a walled tent (pitching it to open up the tent) is of much relevance nowadays: you can simply pitch the fly without the tent. The discussion of boots against sand-shoes is a great improvement but does not deal adequately with the hoary old chestnut of the dangers of sand-shoes in some conditions, such as on sharp rocks or in deep mud.

And some topics that need attention are not dealt with. To take one example, what should you look for in a tent when you expect to encounter snow? The value of vestibules, ventilation and snow-shedding deserves specific treatment.

The photographs which accompany the text are outdated and of poor quality. Does anyone really carry H-frame packs nowadays? Nearly all the packs shown in photographs (so far as one can see in the gloom of their reproduction) are H-frames.



The information section must be regarded with some suspicion: one long-defunct magazine is listed for further reading, and *Wild* is incorrectly named.

The conservation and code of ethics section is generally good, and could well be placed at the start of the book rather than be buried in the text the way it is.

BW

## Ecotourism & Nature-based Holidays

by Janet Richardson and the editors of Choice Books (Choice Books, 1993, RRP \$16.95).

*Ecotourism & Nature-based Holidays* is an embryonic attempt to give purchasers of holidays a chance to judge the environmental credentials of tour operators. Be warned. As explained inside, this is not a guide to ecotourism holidays, but the response to a survey by 201 nature-based tourist operators.

Ecotourism means visiting the bush in an environmentally benign manner, interpreting

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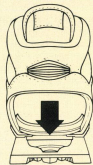
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the environment for the participants, and in some way helping to sustain that environment. Use this book to see how your holidays match up.

The overview, written by Janet Richardson, provides general reading on ecotourism. Unfortunately, the survey results forming the remainder of the book are poorly explained and laid out.

I found the alphabetic listing by operator name frustrating. Tours and accommodation are not even separated. Because the information was supplied by the companies themselves, there is little consistency in responses. What, for example, does 'vehicles used off road' mean?

The most telling question of the survey is 'putting something back in'. Ideally, operators or developments should return profits, expertise or labour to the environment. One operator responded 'Advertise in conservation magazines', while a four-wheel-drive company boasts 'we keep fire breaks clear'. Select carefully before deciding which company to support with your hard-earned dollars.

*Ecotourism & Nature-based Holidays* will, I hope, signal to operators what clients are beginning to expect from their holidays. But for a guide to 'ecotourism', keep on waiting.

Andrew Cox

#### From Forest to Sea

by Eric Rolls (University of Queensland Press, 1993, RRP \$45).

It is fitting that Eric Rolls's name should have more space on the cover of this book than the title. Over the years his detailed historical research has had a profound influence on the way we view the impact of Europeans on this land.

This book of essays carries on the tradition, but is more eclectic than his other books. Each piece is a précis of the history and characters surrounding the issues, whether they be degradation of the Darling River, salination of farmland or the disappearance of pure dingoes. Each also contains a fair amount of polemic; Rolls is certainly no impartial reporter but draws on his 20 years of experience as a farmer and as an historian to push for better treatment of our environment.

And his final analysis is surprisingly optimistic. As one who understands better than most the ways in which Australians have coped in the past with environmental constraints, Rolls is confident that we have the institutions and the inspired individuals who will eventually bring us to a new, sustainable relationship with our land.

Stephen Garnett

#### VIDEOS

##### Everest-Sea to Summit

written, produced and directed by Michael Dillon (Australian Geographic, 1992, RRP \$29.95).

In 1984 Tim Macartney-Snape became the first Australian mountaineer to stand on the summit of Mt Everest. Six years later he returned to climb it a second time and in so doing he also completed the world's longest ascent. Starting from the sea in the Bay of Bengal, he walked and ran some 1000

kilometres across India and Nepal to reach Everest Base Camp. He then climbed solo to the summit without the use of any supplementary oxygen—a significant achievement. Watching the video I wasn't sure which was most dangerous: climbing through the notorious Everest ice-fall, swimming across the Ganges River, or avoiding the Indian traffic! In the end, however, it is Macartney-Snape's amazing video footage of the summit climb which leaves you gasping for breath. His wife, Ann, lives with her own fears and their relationship adds substantially to the film's credibility and allows the viewer to understand another, very important, side of the story. *Everest-Sea to Summit* has won a fistful of international awards and it is easy to see why.

GT

##### The Last Husky

directed by Chris Hilton (Aurora Films, 1993, RRP \$24.95 from ABC shops).

Over the last 100 years huskies have played an important role in Antarctic exploration. A recent international agreement to remove all introduced non-human species from this vast continent resulted in the final, inevitable, sad chapter for the husky. In November 1992 the last of Australia's Antarctic huskies set out from Mawson Station on a 20 000 kilometre journey to their new home in Minnesota, USA. This enjoyable and often moving account is compulsory viewing for those with any interest in Antarctica, its history—and especially dogs.

GT

#### CALENDARS & DIARIES

##### Australian Geographic

###### 1994 Desk Diary

(Australian Geographic Society, RRP \$24.95 plus \$5.00 postage and packaging within Australia).

##### Australian Geographic Society

###### 1994 Calendar

(Australian Geographic Society, RRP \$22.95 plus \$5.00 postage and packaging within Australia).

Received too late for the annual round-up last issue, these late entrants to an already crowded field are worthy of consideration. As almost everything we've seen from the society, both are superior publications. The diary (now sold out, we are informed) is reminiscent of the Australian Conservation Foundation's diary, but includes a minority of photos that are by no means of wilderness subjects. The calendar is in a very large format (550 x 435 millimetres). The calendar's illustrations are all paintings of Australian fauna, and are outstanding.

CB

#### MAPS

##### Douglas-Apsley National Park

(Department of Environment & Land Management of Tasmania, 1993, RRP \$8.00).

This full-colour 1:50 000 map (and notes) covers the north-south track which makes an attractive two- or three-day walk through this east-coast park.

CB

##### Map of the Watersheds of the King, Howqua, and Jamieson Rivers

by S R & P N Brookes (Victorian Mountain Tramping Club, 1993, RRP \$7.00).

This updated version of the producers' most popular map, well known to generations of bushwalkers, includes numerous minor revisions, and is also available in waterproof plastic for \$11.

Glenn van der Nijff

#### PERIODICALS

##### Roots

edited by Nicholas Dattner (Specialty Timber Advisory Group and Victorian Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, 1993, RRP \$8.95).

'For 5000 years we've been fighting over forests. *Everything is about to change.*' Such is the bold prediction on the cover of this glossy production, published with assistance from the Victorian Government.

The magazine itself, however, gives little cause for this optimism.

Even if one had no concern about native forests, biological diversity, the destruction of animals, the massive loss of water resources from logging, about erosion, wilderness, being able to bushwalk and the loss of magnificent trees so that paper can be made, one would still find the timber industry in this country a matter of deep concern. The present rates of logging are nowhere near sustainable. This means that, unless things change fast, the industry is dooming itself and those who rely upon it for a living. And the present logging of native forests is subsidized, removing incentive from industry to concentrate on hardwood plantations, and penalizing the more efficient sectors of the industry.

The emphasis in *Roots* on the use of our natural timber for sawn-wood products, particularly high-value crafts, rather than woodchipping, is welcome, but the analysis of the issues is hopelessly shallow. Almost no appreciation is shown for the value of old-growth forest in its natural state.

The magazine has not been edited to high standards and is fruit-caked with spelling and grammatical errors.

There is little in the magazine that addresses the real causes of the conflict over our forests, let alone gives any prospect of ending that conflict.

BW

#### POSTERS

##### Parks Posters

(Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, 1993, RRP \$8.00 each).

These 14 large-format posters (of slightly varying sizes) depict some of the icons of Victorian parks and are sold separately. Scenes include Mt Feathertop in winter, the Mt Buffalo Gorge, and Liomion Castle (the Cathedral) in the Grampians. The quality of the photography and its reproduction is generally superior and the posters have already proved popular. ■

CB

Publications for possible review are welcome. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.





## TO A ROSSI TREKKER, IT'S JUST ANOTHER BUMP IN THE ROAD.



The thought of attempting to conquer Cradle Mountain is enough to set any bushwalker quaking in their boots. Unless, of course, those boots are a pair of Rossi Trekkers.

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MADE IN AUSTRALIA  
**WORK HARD-PLAY HARD**

# ON THE WRONG TRACK

Australian environmental planning questioned

As Australia's population increases, our capital cities grow in size, extending far out from their central business districts. This urban sprawl becomes particularly apparent when one revisits a city after a prolonged absence. There are new suburbs in what was formerly bushland. Large tracts of land have been cleared of native vegetation, and the natural habitat of wildlife has been severely disturbed. In my opinion, urban sprawl is more damaging to our environment than mining and quarrying operations.

Fortunately, some city and shire councils are now proclaiming vegetation protection ordinances to conserve areas of special significance. One such area in Queensland is located in the Brisbane suburb of Indooroopilly; it incorporates the bank of the Brisbane River and adjacent land which contains pockets of rain forest. Here it is pleasing to find Australian brush turkeys (scrub turkeys) just eight kilometres south-west of the Brisbane GPO.

One vividly sees the extent of our sprawling cities by flying over them. It is rare to see tracts of native bushland except on city outskirts. Accordingly, the greatest scope for the proclamation of conservation ordinances exists in these regions. I hope that more areas of native bushland will be acquired and preserved through the action of councils and other bodies while the land is still available. Our health and happiness can benefit if we conserve more of our natural environment.

Alan Beasley  
Balwyn, Vic

I would like to recommend a recent publication to your readership: *Water in Australia—Managing Economic, Environmental and Community Reform*, which is edited by Michael Johnson & Stephen Rix (published by Pluto Press Australia in association with the Public Sector Research Centre, University of New South Wales). This book takes a very serious look at the crisis of the water-cycle in Australia. A self-acknowledged 'green' statement, it discusses the major structural, political and environmental problems facing 'water production' and conservation.

*Water in Australia* is highly critical of the 'economic rationalist' approach to water management. This 'free market' ideology has already caused immense change within the water industry, namely the introduction of corporatization and privatization. In Victoria we are faced with the implementation of 'water-trading rights' which operate in a manner similar to 'pollution-trading rights'. The underlying premise is that the discipline of the market-place will allocate water most efficiently. But it does nothing to address the

systematic degradation of the environment that is the result of a (historically) European and, dare I say it, capitalist sensibility...

In the UK, where water management has been privatized, water is now dirty, scarce and profitable. Rivers are running dry in a country that is renowned for its rain, and those rivers that are still running are often toxic. Thousands of households have been disconnected for non-payment and are throwing sewage out the windows. These same families are collecting water from gutters so it's understandable that there have been large outbreaks of dysentery.

As *Water in Australia* says, 'water is fundamental to human life' because it 'is the medium by which all organisms—plant and animal, terrestrial and marine—are tied together'. Surely this most fundamental resource should be controlled by the community and not thrown open to the capricious winds of profiteers.

Andrea Sharam  
Brunswick, Vic

## Don't call us, we'll call you...

Gosh! How on earth did Roald Amundsen find the South Pole, Myles Dunphy survive a flooded Kowmung River, Jack Thwaites straighten out Tasmania's horizontal scrub and vertical tracks, or Bernard O'Reilly conquer the horrors of the Lamington Plateau, all without the wonders of the microchip and the satellite?

We were thrilled to read in *Wild* no 51 how mobile phones and GPS would help us overcome our deepest fears and tackle head-on the challenges of flooded rivers, tempestuous weather, dense trackless scrub and bull-ant nests. Not to mention monitor our position on the futures market.

Our physical and psychological security could be even further enhanced if these and similar devices were used by governments to monitor and regulate park use. You know, bar-coding of park users, radio-transmitting dog collars to track movements and portable faxes for amending route plans.

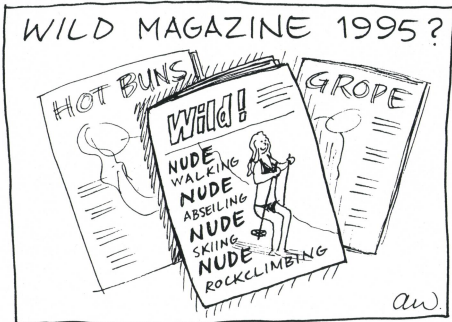
Well, we armchair bushwalkers are no longer condemned to a life of suburban fantasy and ice-axe envy. We're off to the nearest Electrowank Megastore right away to get kitted out for some Adventure with Security!

And, by the way, there was really no need for Hans Fah to be coy about his apparent commercial interest in flogging GPSs as all his details (mobile phone number included) were printed on page 114. We'd never question the independence of someone as obviously well-meaning as Hans.

John Ulrichsen and Annie Whybourne  
Herston, Qld

## The last post?

Finally, a fitting tribute to Peter Treseder, one of Australia's great outdoor adventurers (*Wild* no 51). Oh, that I were half as fit as he!



# ARKOS, IN TRUE ITALIAN STYLE

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**ARKOS**

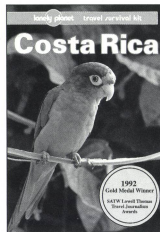


IN STEP WITH NATURE

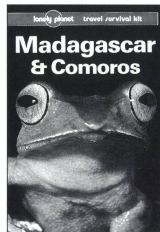
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Why, then, go and spoil it with the irrelevant paragraph in the same issue (page 19) about sking from Perisher to Kiandra, nude? Even if Peter is an egomaniac, this information would be more at home in the likes of *Australasian Post* than in your magazine which you expect to be taken seriously.

While in the mood, I feel I must question the wisdom of portraying actions such as in *Wild Shot* in *Wild* no 51. Did Warren Williams end up in a spinal care unit? Many others have after attempting similar feats. I accept that many outdoor sports covered in *Wild* have an element of risk and danger, but should stupidity be encouraged? Or held up as an example to younger readers?

It is interesting to note also that Hat Head National Park (page 79) has joined the growing ranks of Victorian and New South Wales citizens migrating north to the Sunshine State. Last time I saw Hat Head, it was somewhere down near Kempsey!

John Edwards  
Brisbane, Qld

In *Wild Information* of *Wild* no 51 a report by Beth Treseder described what was 'believed to be the first ascent of Batu Lawi', Sarawak, by Peter Treseder and five other Australians. As a keen follower of Peter's exploits I would not want to detract from his record, but in this case he was beaten to the punch. In his book *Mountains of Malaysia—A Practical Guide and Manual* (1988) John Briggs attributes the first ascent of Batu Lawi to a group from the 14th/20th King's Hussars on 3 January 1986.

The book also describes the significance of Batu Lawi to the military during the Second World War, especially to the Z Special Force. A wooden commemorative plaque was placed on the lower peak of the mountain in 1946, subsequently replaced by a bronze copy in 1987.

My interest in this stems from living in Malaysia for two years (1990–91), and being a bushwalker/climber.

Looking forward to the next edition of 'Treseder's travels'.

Geoff Holloway  
Wodonga, Vic

*Batu Lawi* expeditioner, Ian Brown, responds: It certainly is claimed in the book *Mountains of Malaysia* that a British Army team made the first ascent of the high peak of Batu Lawi.

We were unaware of this claim until we arrived in the area, and proceeded with our climb while seeking out more information (the book has no details of the ascent). As a result of information collected and observed, we formed the opinion that although the British certainly did reach the summit, they probably did not get there by climbing from the bottom. The situation is complex, the information vague and conflicting, and perhaps our opinion could be seen as wishful thinking; however, a few salient points are as follows:

1 We could find no witness to the British ascent among local people.

2 One local account suggests the climb failed and a helicopter was used to put the team on the summit. There is some evidence to support this story.

3 There was evidence that the lower part of the route climbed by our team had been previously

climbed by the British to an obvious point of retreat. There was no further evidence about that point, except on the summit. The type of climbing done by the British included aid-climbing on pitons up a good jam-crack which was free-climbed during our ascent.

We are vigorously seeking clarification of the British climb, and will keep *Wild* readers informed of results. We hope this correspondence may flush out some leads.

The whole issue highlights the difficulty of exporting our Western concepts to an area of poor communication and oral traditions.

Ian Brown  
Mt Victoria, NSW

#### Any port in a storm

I refer to your Action Box in *Wild* no 49 where you suggested that readers write to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority asking why tankers are allowed in a World Heritage area...

World Heritage listing does not automatically mean a ban on commercial activities—the important issue is not to threaten its values.

No doubt the person who contributed the item naively believes that tankers should travel outside the reef. This would not be appreciated by the people and the businesses in central and north Queensland who live beside the World Heritage Area but rely on some of those tankers for their fuel needs. I am sure that tankers are the most environmentally friendly way of transporting fuel from refinery to distribution centre (compared with road or rail transport)... Imagine the logistics of trying to fight an oil spill from a shipping casualty outside the reef...

The item contains some creative journalism which tends to mislead. The high reporting rate in the Great Barrier Reef is mainly due to the usage of its sheltered waters and the high level of surveillance and monitoring by governments and the GBRMPA. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) states that 'The high incidence of minor oil spills in the GBR is mainly caused by fishing boats and not large ships. Ruptured vessel spills are very rare occurrences'. Hence, calling for the banning of tankers from the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area will not reduce the rate of reported oil spills in this area...

N G Bowley  
Planning & Environment Manager  
Gladstone Port Authority  
Gladstone, Qld

#### Wild in the East

...Wild has always been a brilliantly professional publication. I have always been in admiration of your ability to produce the magazine for such a long period without it becoming repetitive, always finding new topics to present, without having to go outside the original intent of the magazine. For me it is the criterion of a good magazine...

Peter James  
Hong Kong

Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address, for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

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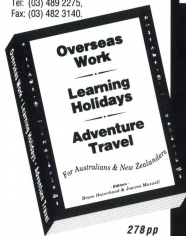
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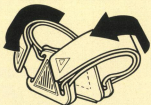
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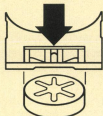
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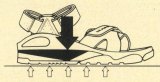
body's weight. When compressed, the Air Cushion creates a heel cup that works with our Strap and Strut Assembly to keep the heel centred and supported for improved fit and control.

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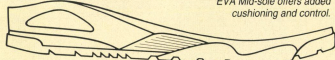
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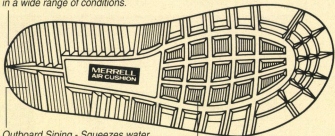
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FIGURE 8

### Ascenders



CROLL EXPEDITION



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### Climbing



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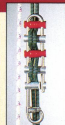


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### Descenders



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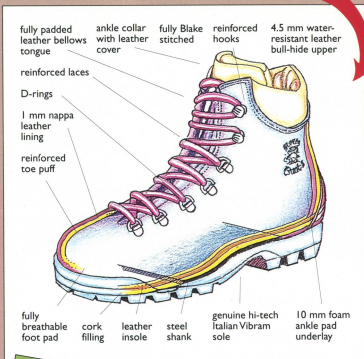


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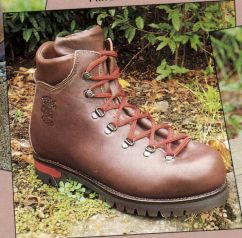


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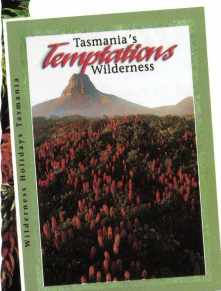
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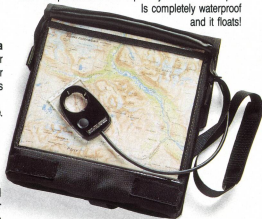
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Figure 8

RESCUE 8



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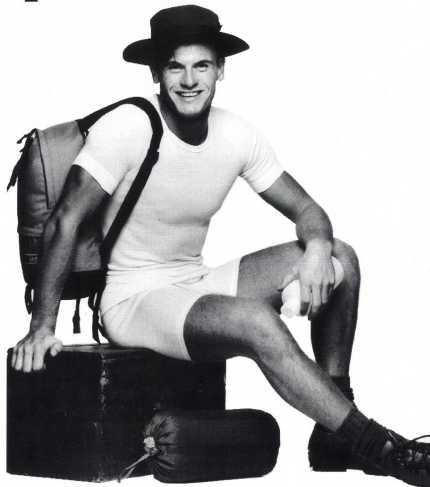
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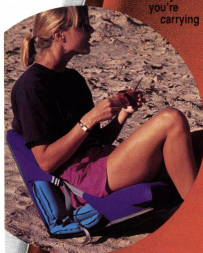


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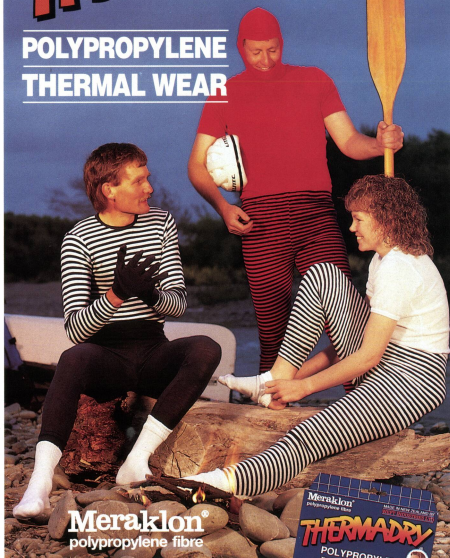
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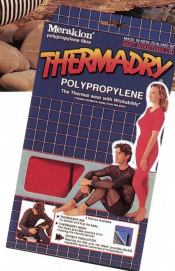
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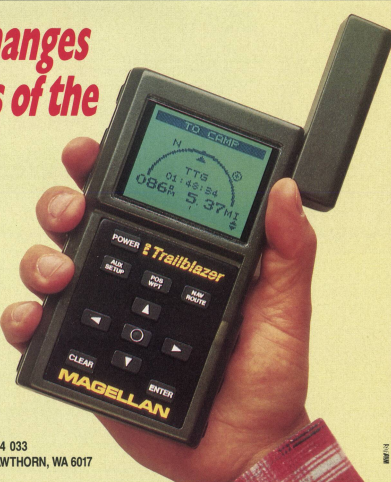
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No place for back-peddling: German adventurer Oliver Grossmann free-wheeling on Kachoong, a popular grade-21 rockclimb at Mt Arapiles, Victoria. (This climb was featured on the cover of *Wild* no 22.)  
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